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BLINDS DOWN:

A CHRONICLE OF CHARMINSTER.

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CHAPTER XIII.

CONFIDENCES.

WITHIN a week the eyes of England were focussed upon Charminster, to the intense exasperation of the good townspeople, who, having sighed for cheap advertisement, were now indignant because they were getting it, not quite in the form they wished, for nothing. It being the silly season, two ha'penny dailies opened a column apiece to correspondence, and screeds appeared signed 'Hygiene,' 'Sanitas,' and the like, with caustic editorial comments. The 'St. Stephen's Gazette,' having begun the campaign, carried it on with the trenchant dignity which distinguishes that famous organ of the Liberal party. Charminster became the scapegoat of all ancient, slumbering, moss-grown towns.

Meantime, the Misses Mauleverer did not retreat to Bognor. Rose, indeed, achieved a masterly compromise. She promised to keep out of Hog Lane, and she persuaded her Aunts that it would be cowardly to run away. She remained, however, in quarantine at the Dower House, Rosetta and Derek being declared 'out of bounds.'

This was Derek's great chance with his editor—and he knew it.

'As soon as I heard of the visitation,' he told Rosetta, 'I went to our chief, and told him that I had lived in Hog Lane, and knew the conditions. "Devenish," said he, "I believe you are the man for this nasty job. Make what you can of it."'

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Rosetta was not long in discovering that he meant to make much of it, regardless of the feelings of landlords and officials. Possibly he had inherited a craving to destroy vermin from his fox-hunting ancestors. And if foxes could not be killed in the open, he did not hesitate to dig them out of snug earths.

Amongst other respectable city fathers he attacked was Dr. Pogany. Dr. Pogany's most dangerous rival was a young, up-to-date doctor of the name of Round, who had been house-surgeon at one of the big London hospitals. From Round Derek obtained much of his 'copy,' and Round, having suffered many snubs from authority, was not inclined to spare anybody, least of all himself.

Loving a fight for a fight's sake, Derek flung himself into the battle. And, of course, it leaked out that the articles in the 'St. Stephen's' were written by his pen. The emotions of the ladies at the Dower House when they perused passages like the following can be imagined :

'Hog Lane, as the name implies, stands festering in the sun, an object-lesson of ignorance, stupidity, and selfishness. The hovels, sties in which a self-respecting pig might hesitate to wallow, are owned by well-to-do churchgoers and communicants comfortably housed in the upper part of the town, with their eyes fixed upon their own salvation, blind to the damnation of those from whom they derive a substantial portion of their income, deaf to the mute appeal of starving children, turning their noses from the reek of squalor and disease, gazing complacently at the flowers in their own fools' paradise, admiring themselves and their works, and reverentially leaving the responsibility of everything which offends their susceptibilities—to God!'

Jaqueline read this excerpt aloud to Prudence.

'Is the writer of this alluding to us?' she asked in a quavering voice.

As a fact, Derek was not alluding to the ladies, but they were disagreeably sensible that the cap made for Mr. Hooton, who owned some of the Hog Lane cottages, or for John Possnicker, the principal draper, might fit them.

'Who has written it?' said Prudence.

'I can tell you,' answered Rose. 'Derek Devenish.'

'The allusion to communicants is outrageous.'

'Why?'

The ladies closed their lips, and allowed their wrinkled lids to veil indignant eyes. Derek had passed beyond the pale.

Matters became worse when he attacked Dr. Pogany. The ladies felt that the 'St. Stephen's Gazette' ought to be burnt by the common hangman, or, failing him, Crump; but curiosity overcame disgust. They trembled with rage as they read other articles, but they went on reading them. *A propos* of Dr. Pogany, Jaqueline said tearfully:

'Grey hairs should be spared.'

And once more Rose used that aggravating monosyllable:

'Why?'

Let us admit that Derek allowed enthusiasm to whirl him from the pleasant domain of discretion. He was writing at white-heat, scribbling notes amidst scenes of indescribable horror, working strenuously, acclaimed by those who worked with him, abominated by the many who held aloof.

Details of his untiring energy reached Rose through the solid medium of Crump. The aged handmaiden kept a soft corner in her desiccated heart for all bold spirits of the opposite sex. She had confirmation strong from Thomas Veal:

'Seemin'ly 'e ain't afraid o' nothink, Master Derek. 'E ain't even afraid of a policeman, no more 'an 'e is of me and you!'

And, naturally, Derek fired Rose, constrained to look on, twiddling idle thumbs, when the bodies and bones of her friends were aching with fatigue and exhaustion.

The mortality was frightful.

Captain Mauleverer paid his promised visit. Prudence begged him to stay away from Charminster, but he laughed at her fears. Mary Mauleverer asked the pair to the Court. Rose refused. The Aunts protested, but she remained firm.

'I stay here till this is over.'

Throughout August the sun blazed down upon Hog Lane. But at the end of the month a mighty wind, following torrential rain, began to blow the disease out of the town. The tale of deaths diminished; and Derek was recalled to London. Before he left Charminster he had an interview with Rose. The pair met upon the river; and punt challenged punt. Derek looked none the worse for his campaign, and it seemed to Rose that he gazed at her with bolder eyes.

'I'm off to-morrow,' he said loudly.

'Oh! Derek, the Aunts are furious with you.'

'I'm really most awfully sorry. Mrs. Newman told me that I've been indiscreet. Are you furious, too?'

'No.'

He stayed the progress of his punt with the pole, thrusting it deep into the mud. Rose did the same. A dozen feet of water separated them, and the distance seemed to Derek significant, because she was so near to him and yet so distractingly out of reach. He thought of the long hours she had spent with Victor, and jealousy tore at his vitals.

'You look fit,' he remarked.

'Perhaps your energy has kept me so.'

This made him open his eyes. What did she mean? Nothing, of course. A slightly ironic habit of speech.

'I hear Mauleverer is with you.'

'Yes. He wished to help, but the Aunts, of course, forbade it.'

'Is he making much of a visit?' He put the question lightly, but Rose was not deceived. A demure sparkle twinkled in her eyes as she replied:

'He will be here another ten days. We ride together and play tennis. I've come on a lot at tennis, although he beats me disgracefully.'

'Love games,' growled Derek.

'What did you say, Derek?'

'Nothing worth repeating.'

He laid violent hands on his pole. What was the use of staring at grapes out of reach? Rose's smile, as he wrenched the pole out of the mud, struck him as derisive.

'Good-bye, Rose. You know that I wish you luck.'

'What luck?'

'All the luck you've not got already.'

'Thank you. You seem to be in a hurry?'

He laughed at her tone, sore though he was, and said: 'I suppose I've acquired the habit. Also, aren't you breaking rules by speaking to me?'

'That's more my affair than yours, isn't it?'

Her apparent coolness misled him. He thought to himself: 'She's a flirt, practising with me to pass the time. I can't stand this much longer.' Aloud, he said politely: 'I beg your pardon.'

Rose said slowly :

'I promised Aunt Prudence that I would not speak to you if I happened to meet you in Charminster. How is Mrs. Newman?'

'Rather fagged.'

'She's wonderful; but the Aunts are not quite so pleased with her.'

'Why?'

'They think she inspired your articles. They know that she got you your billet.'

'Please tell the Aunts that Mrs. Newman tried to make me tone down my stuff.'

'Don't get excited. I'm looking forward to playing the peacemaker.'

'On my behalf as well?'

'That won't be easy. They are sadly ruffled, poor dears! By the way, why didn't you come to see me in London?'

'I wasn't asked.'

'Oh! Of course, if you stand on ceremony with old friends——!'

'I was busy all day and every day.'

'Sundays included?'

'Mother books me ahead for all Sundays.'

'I wonder when I shall see you again?'

Anybody, except a youth blinded by love, would have remarked the anxiety in her soft voice. Derek, however, was confirmed in the conviction that she was flirting. Jealousy of Victor consumed judgment and common-sense. She walked and rode with Victor, read aloud to him, sat for hours together with him. The fellow wouldn't have turned up, defying a pestilence, had he not received encouragement. The affair was as good as settled. He replied grimly :

'I shan't come back to Charminster. Good-bye, Rose.'

'Good-bye, Derek.'

To relieve his feelings he pushed with his pole so violently that he nearly fell overboard. Rose was unwise enough to laugh. Whereupon, recovering his balance and losing his temper, he said savagely :

'Awfully funny, isn't it?'

Before she could answer, his punt was several yards down stream. A lump came in her throat. She wanted to speak, to

call him back, but the lump seemed to get bigger. She decided to follow, but her own pole, stuck fast in the deep mud of Char, refused obstinately to budge. In the mid-distance Derek was punting furiously.

'Why did I laugh,' she asked herself, 'when I wanted to cry?'

She tugged at the pole, but, when it came out, pride, and the possibility that she would not overtake Derek, baulked pursuit. She returned to the Dower House, and was very cross with Victor when he asked in all innocence if she had been enjoying herself.

At the end of ten days the Heir of the Family asked her to marry him, and, after being refused for the second time, was obliged to tell the Aunts of his ill-fortune. They were confounded, and, as usual, petulant with perplexity and dismay.

'We made sure that all was well,' said Jaqueline.

Prudence, with a tremendous effort, collected her wits.

'My dear mother,' she observed, 'refused my father five times. My father often laughed about it.'

'We Mauleverers are persevering,' said Victor.

'There can be nobody else,' murmured Jaqueline. 'Mary Mauleverer told me that in London she showed no preference for anybody except you.'

Victor remained silent, but he also had assumed a slightly peevish expression.

'You don't think there is anybody else?' continued Jaqueline.

'There's the hero.'

'What hero?'

'Derek Devenish.'

'My dear Victor, are you quite mad?'

He replied obstinately:

'I know she thinks a lot of him.'

Both ladies hastened to disabuse his mind of such a monstrous possibility. They succeeded partially, and the young man promised amiably enough to try again later on, when he met Rose at Mauleverer Court.

After he went away, Rose was allowed to visit The Cottage, where Mrs. Newman was undergoing a sort of rest-cure. Round said that she had overworked mind and body, and prescribed an easy chair on the lawn, and plenty of light and agreeable

fiction. The epidemic was over, but it had accomplished its purpose. Charminster proceeded to put its ancient houses, big and little, into decent order. Long ago, Septimus Lovibond had remarked that nothing short of an invasion would wake up the sleepy town. Perhaps, in the case of invasions, germs may be as stimulating as Germans.

Each day Rose read aloud to Rosetta; and each day apprehension clawed at the mother's heart, for she believed that Rose was sickening for the fever. Rose ridiculed such fears, and Round, although unable to examine one of Dr. Pogany's patients, declared emphatically that the young lady must be suffering from something else, possibly an affection of the heart.

Before September was out, Rosetta found courage to ask:

'My dear, what is wrong with you? Don't exasperate me by replying, "Nothing." You have lost colour and appetite. I am sure that you don't sleep well. Now—deliver your soul!'

'I can't.'

'Ah! There is something. Are you sorry that you refused Captain Mauleverer?'

'I don't know.'

'You ought to know. I must shake knowledge into you.'

'Aunt Jaqueline believes Aunt Prudence is ill, but she refuses to see Dr. Pogany. I believe she is worrying terribly because I did refuse Victor. She set her heart on the match. I daresay I shan't find anybody I like better.'

'Oh!'

'I've always liked him.'

'And you think life with him would be easy and pleasant?'

'I am quite sure of it.'

'So am I. But—would that satisfy you? Can you curl up in front of a nice fire and purr contentedly for the rest of your days?'

'Lots of women ask for nothing better.'

'Are you one of them?'

'Perhaps.'

'Do you think your liking for Captain Mauleverer would stand the test of poverty, for instance?'

'But we shouldn't be poor.'

'I want you to use your imagination, to face things as they might be. Could you look forward cheerfully to spending a year alone with him on a desert island, food and sunshine guaranteed?'

'How oddly you put things, Mrs. Newman!'

'Could you cook and wash for him?'

Rose laughed.

'He wouldn't eat what I cooked.'

'Evading my questions you answer them. I don't believe a marriage of convenience would agree with you. It does agree, undoubtedly, with women who think convenience the greatest thing in the world.'

'Of course, I don't think that.'

'I want you to project your mind into the future, to decide what you want, and then concentrate your will upon getting it.'

'Suppose I want something I can't get?'

Further than that the maid refused to go. Rosetta bit her lip with impatience. To sit at ease, watching the freshness and daintiness of the face opposite, and to realise one's impotence to share experience with the inexperienced, became maddening. And she found it difficult to speak about herself; difficult to give form and colour to ill-defined memories, to blurred, amorphous incidents, visualised so acutely at the time, but now so attenuated.

Next day the struggle to obtain a girl's confidence began again. Rose spoke of the approaching 'shoot' at Mauleverer Court. Victor would be there with two guns and a loader.

'He cares for me tremendously,' said Rose. 'Last month I was punting him one day, and the punt leaked. He sat in an inch of water without knowing it. But,' she sighed, 'we're so different.'

'There's nothing more stupendously significant than differences in temperament. That's at the root of all evil. Nobody ever attempts to adjust them, and I doubt very much if they can be adjusted.'

'I love these talks with you.'

'I am going to speak of myself,' said Rosetta abruptly. 'When I was your age—yes, and before—I fell in love.'

Rose sat bolt upright, turning shining eyes upon the speaker.

'With Mr. Newman?' she asked eagerly.

'Yes, with Mr. Newman. But at that time he was poor, and I hadn't a penny. We were not allowed to become engaged. He went abroad and lost everything he had, including the chance of getting me.'

'How awful!'

'You have read "Back of Nowhere." All that happened.'

'When I read it I knew it must have happened.'

'Then I made a marriage of convenience. Never speak of this!'

'A marriage of convenience—you?'

'It was disastrous. I pass over that. After my first husband died I married Mr. Newman, but we had both changed enormously. It was not the same.'

Rose leant forward, and said in a whisper:

'Is it wicked to marry one man if you love somebody else?'

'Yes.'

'Even if the person you love doesn't love you?'

'Yes.'

Rose blushed beneath the elder woman's penetrating glance, but the Mauleverer instinct triumphed. She remained obstinately silent. Rosetta said abruptly:

'I know what is the matter with you.'

The blush deepened.

'You care for Derek Devenish.'

Rose's eyes filled with tears.

'Are you ashamed of loving one of the finest young men I have ever met?'

'No; but I'm ashamed of caring for him, when he doesn't care for me.'

'Perhaps he does care for you.'

'Oh! Mrs. Newman!' Then her face clouded, as she continued impetuously: 'If he did care, my Aunts would never let me marry him. They are furious with him. They think he attacked them.'

'So he did—unconsciously.'

'I don't think he cares—much. If anything came of it, it would kill Aunt Prudence. And when I think of what I owe those two——!'

'If you can't persuade your Aunt to call in Dr. Pogany I must try my powers of persuasion.'

'I wish you would.'

That night Rosetta hardly closed her eyes. Her own youth came back to her, and with it the conviction that her daughter's life was about to be wrecked upon the same quicksands which had engulfed her happiness. The child had begun to measure

her debt to devoted guardians, and the sum-total was likely to awake a lively desire to pay something on account.

Upon the following afternoon Rosetta called at the Dower House, and was received graciously, the Aunts having purged their minds of the tainting thought that so charming a woman could have inspired brutal and unjustifiable articles. Jaqueline said in her softest voice :

‘ I trust you have recovered your strength? ’

‘ I was only tired and—frightened. ’

‘ Frightened? ’ echoed Prudence.

‘ I feared I might be sickening for the fever, and, oddly enough, I was afraid to consult a doctor, terrified lest he might say that I had got it. When he did come he laughed at me. ’

Prudence nodded, much impressed. Rosetta marked the impression, and proceeded to deepen it.

‘ I should have felt such a fool, if he had found the fever on me, and then said that he had been called in too late to cope with it. Doctors, I believe, are terribly handicapped by folly of that sort. ’

‘ I quite agree, ’ said Jaqueline, with a side glance at Prudence.

Rosetta said no more, but when she was alone for a minute with Jaqueline that lady whispered hurriedly :

‘ I was delighted to hear you speak as you did about calling in doctors before a case becomes really serious. *Entre nous*, I have been worrying about Prudence. After your talk, I fancy she will be more reasonable. ’

Within a few days Rosetta learned from Rose that Dr. Pogany had been summoned, and, after careful examination, diagnosed the case as one of acute dyspepsia, which would yield to ordinary treatment. Rose added :

‘ I shall go to the Court with an easier mind. ’

Then, abruptly, with heightened colour, she said :

‘ General Stonestreet has appointed Victor one of his aides-de-camp. ’

‘ Which means, I suppose, that he will go out to South Africa if—— ’

‘ It is certain that war will be declared in a few days. ’

This was said during that anxious first week in October just before the Boer ultimatum was handed to the British Agent at Pretoria. All England was simmering with excitement, and

every woman thinking of the men who would be the first to go. Rosetta saw at a glance that Rose was tremendously affected, and that the one thing which might turn the scale in Victor's favour had come to pass. If he pressed her now, she might yield; and there could be no doubt that he would use every argument in his power, and that the Aunts would support him with tears in their soft eyes, and quavering appeals.

To mask her own agitation, Rosetta began to talk of the impending campaign. General Stonestreet was a cavalry leader, who had seen Victor ride to hounds; to be selected by him as aide-de-camp was a great compliment, as Rosetta remarked. Rose said eagerly:

'Isn't it? He has never had a chance to show what he is made of.'

Rosetta was too wise to dispute this. After more talk, she said quietly:

'What are you doing this afternoon?'

'I am playing a last game of tennis at the Easters.'

'I think I shall call on your Aunts.'

'Do. They will be delighted to see you.'

'Will this appointment interfere with Captain Mauleverer's visit to the Court?'

'I had a letter from him this morning. He hopes to be there next week, but if that is impossible he has promised to run down here to say good-bye.'

Rosetta kissed her.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BLINDS ARE PULLED UP.

ROSETTA found Jaqueline beaming, her soft face radiating tenderness, as she murmured:

'Dear Dr. Pogany says that my sister's heart is quite strong, wonderfully so for a woman of her age. The palpitations arose entirely from dyspepsia. Oh! the relief to me, Mrs. Newman! I feel years younger.'

Nevertheless, she spoke tremulously, with quavering gestures of head and hands. Then, in the effusion of joy she kissed Rosetta, and taking off her spectacles wiped them several times.

An instant later, Prudence came in, very erect, with the air of one who has decided to live to be a hundred at least.

'I assured Jaqueline from the first that it was nothing, a temporary indisposition. But it is pleasant to have one's opinion confirmed by a professional man.'

The three ladies sat down. Prudence enthroned herself upon the chair in which her father had died, and assumed a majesty of deportment reminding Rosetta of days long past, for this particular chair had been used as a seat of judgment. Swiftly the years rolled back, and Rosetta beheld herself a child of ten awaiting rebuke from the Olympians, conscious that excuses would not be accepted, that the rigour of justice must be imposed.

'I have come to you,' she began, 'upon an intimate matter, which you may think, Miss Mauleverer, does not concern me, but before I say more I should like to mention one fact. I knew your sister, Lady Brough, very intimately indeed.'

Prudence was extraordinarily shrewd in certain ways. Perhaps the aquiline nose which carries itself high above the affairs of others does detect with unerring scent the odour of interference. Her voice lost its pleasant warmth, as she replied courteously:

'Oddly enough, in her letters to us, Lady Brough did not mention your name.'

'I had not married Mr. Newman at that time.'

'Oh?'

The exclamation was interrogative. It occurred to both the ladies that the moment was pat for explanation. All Charminster wondered who Mrs. Newman *was*. The disclosure of her maiden name seemed imminent. Rosetta smiled faintly, as she continued:

'I could give you details of that intimacy, which would show how near it was, and would illustrate what you know already, namely that Lady Brough, after her marriage, could not bring herself to write, even to you, of her unhappiness, which she kept hidden from everybody—except me.'

'Except you?' repeated Jaqueline softly.

'Except me,' Rosetta went on. 'She had hardly any secrets from me.'

'This is most surprising,' said Prudence, frowning.

'Lady Mauleverer knew, and I knew, that the marriage with Sir Rodney Brough was one of convenience. She married the man she didn't love, because she could not marry the man she did love—devotedly.'

Her voice died away in a soft whisper.

'Good gracious!' ejaculated Jaqueline, trembling with agitation. Prudence remained rigid, speechless with astonishment and incredulity.

'That man,' said Rosetta, 'was Septimus Lovibond. You suspected the truth, although you refused to face it. You,' she looked at Prudence, 'arranged that Septimus Lovibond should be sent abroad.'

Prudence compressed her lips. Her face grew white and austere, as she answered:

'I am astonished, Mrs. Newman, that you should know these things. You speak with such conviction that I hardly dare to question your statements. I did suspect a—a flirtation, not,' her voice hardened, 'not an infatuation which must have been deliberately concealed from us. Do you affirm solemnly that Rosetta told you she *loved* Septimus Lovibond?'

'I pledge you my word of honour.'

'God help us!' exclaimed Jaqueline.

'In arranging that this young man should be sent abroad I acted according to my lights. I have nothing to regret. Under similar circumstances I would so act again.'

'That is why I am here,' said Rosetta.

'I don't understand.'

'I come to you, Miss Mauleverer, as the most intimate friend of your dead sister, to say to you what I believe she would say herself, if she were here. I despise officious interference as much as you do. At this moment I am suffering cruelly.'

'Please go on.'

'I can't believe that Rosetta loved Septimus,' declared Jaqueline tearfully.

'Lady Mauleverer will confirm that.'

'You know her too?'

'Very well indeed. We have seldom met of late, but we have corresponded for years.'

Jaqueline burst out crying, rocking to and fro in a paroxysm of misery, murmuring brokenly:

'If she loved him—! Oh! I can't bear the thought of that. I can't bear it! Poor child!'

'Jaqueline,' commanded Prudence, 'please control yourself! Mrs. Newman is still a comparative stranger, and I cannot yet grasp her reason for inflicting this painful scene upon us.'

Jaqueline dabbed at her eyes with a filmy cambric handkerchief.

'My reason is that you are, consciously or unconsciously—I believe *unconsciously*—imposing a marriage of convenience upon Rosetta's daughter.'

Very rarely did Prudence lose control of her temper; but the de Clancy blood had been hot, and time had not altogether cooled it. She said with asperity:

'I must decline to discuss that with you, Mrs. Newman.'

'Sister!'

'Jaqueline, hold your tongue! Mrs. Newman will be telling us next that Rose has fallen in love with some impossible young man.'

'Rose has fallen in love, Miss Mauleverer.'

'What!'

She raised her voice, Jaqueline, glancing at the windows, opening wide upon the quiet garden, got up unsteadily, and closed them. Prudence exclaimed scornfully: 'As you will, but I think we need air. So, Rose has fallen in love! With whom, may I ask?'

'With Derek Devenish.'

Jaqueline groaned, falling collapsed into her chair, covering her quivering face with her hands.

'He told you that?' asked Prudence.

'She told me.'

The cruel thrust went home. For the first time Prudence winced, inasmuch as this stranger had won confidence withheld from her and Jaqueline. She was a just woman, with a mind narrow but deep and lucid. Unlike Jaqueline, who may be compared with a sun-dial, recording only sunny hours, the elder sister had never hid from herself disagreeable truths. She had ignored much during her long life, had refused to see much, but the things which intimately concerned her, good and evil, she remembered. At this moment she knew that Rosetta's confidence had been withheld because her upbringing was strict, unduly so by the light of the love lavished upon her child. Consistently tender and indulgent had the sisters been to little Rose, and it was their dearest joy to reflect that they had won and kept a heart that lay open before them, a crystal pool into which they might gaze, beholding all reflections from within and without.

Two tears trickled down Prudence's thin, faded cheeks, and fell unheeded upon the black silk apron which she always wore.

That was her only sign of weakness. Possibly, too, the sight of Jaqueline, crushed and speechless, roused the pride and obstinacy of her nature. She lifted her fine head, and met Rosetta's sorrowful glance.

'I thank you,' she said coldly, 'for telling me this. I will deal with the matter.'

'But how?'

'You are pressing me too hard, Mrs. Newman. There is nothing more to be said. Please leave us.'

She rose with dignity, not offering her hand.

Very slowly, she moved towards the bell.

'Stay!' exclaimed Rosetta.

Her voice rang out imperatively. Prudence turned, not sorry, perhaps, that this stranger was making it possible for a courteous, long-suffering woman to administer a rebuke to an unwelcome guest. Rosetta may have divined that if she spoke at all, she must speak now, with the passion long suppressed, speak so swiftly that interruption would be burked.

'How will you deal with it? Answer me that! Is a tragic history about to repeat itself? Are you going to separate Derek and Rose as long ago you separated Septimus and Rosetta? He is worthy of her. If it were not so, I would move heaven and earth to prevent their marriage. He has everything that a lover should have—except money; and she has that. They are young, they can wait a couple of years, but for God's sake, for the sake of your unhappy sister, pause before you tamper with the souls of these two. Pause, I say, before you imperil the tender love which Rose bears you. Pause!'

In her excitement and passion she forgot to lower her voice. She spoke with Rosetta's clear tones, with Rosetta's passionate entreaty. And into her pale face flowed the warm blood of youth, never so warm as when pleading for youth. The ladies stared at her in silence. It seemed to them that Rosetta had spoken, that this was indeed a message from the beloved dead. Under this poignant conviction Prudence answered. Many years before, Mary Mauleverer had thus extorted an exposition of principles, a defence of rules elaborately formulated, and kept inviolate.

'I reply to you, Mrs. Newman, under protest. I am Rose's

guardian, and as such I shall do what I deem to be my duty. I consider this young man unfit to marry my niece. Proof lies in the fact that he has abused our hospitality and friendship in carrying on this clandestine love-affair. He has not behaved like a gentleman.'

'Pardon me. There has been no love-making. He loves her, she loves him, but no words have passed between them. That makes the situation more delicate. That excuses my presence here, because each has confided in me, and each thinks that the other doesn't care. But they care so much that their lives will be wrecked if you choose to blind yourself to the presence of true love.'

'You have relieved my mind,' said Prudence, 'but my opinion of Derek Devenish is not changed; and I have known him longer than you. He struck his own father.'

'Under the provocation of seeing his mother ill-treated.'

'I cannot go into that. The young man is violent; his ways are not our ways; young girls are foolish; Rose will soon get over this.'

'Did her mother get over it?'

'Mrs. Newman, I must insist that no more be said. I acquit you of interference, but this is an affair in which you are, and must remain, an outsider.'

She glanced at Jaqueline.

'I quite agree,' murmured the younger sister.

'I am an old woman,' said Prudence, with pathetic dignity, 'and the day cannot be far distant when I shall meet my sister. I am not afraid of that meeting, and I say this to you because you were her friend. Because of that friendship I have borne with you patiently. I shall deal with the child knowing that I must answer for my conduct to my God, and, if He so wills it, to Rose's mother.'

The grim inflexibility of tone was more eloquent than the words. Rosetta realised that if she remained silent the tremendous will of this old woman would stand as a colossal obstacle between Derek and Rose. Something told her that they would never surmount it, and, if they did, long years must pass, three at the least, during which innumerable changes would take place. She thought of what she had suffered, of the wakeless nights, of the dreary days, of the fruitless longing. . . .

Had she the courage to exclaim: 'I am Rosetta!'

Panoramically, the consequences of confession spread themselves before her throbbing mind.

It meant the rending of that sacred veil behind which was enshrined the saint and martyr; it would impose shocking suffering upon her sisters; it must exercise an immeasurable influence upon Rose; last and not least, it would drive her from a sanctuary, from the place where she had found peace and renewed interests in life.

'You force me to say more,' murmured Rosetta.

'More?'

Rosetta moved a few steps, half-turning, so that the light from the north window fell upon her face. She was standing below her portrait, with her back to it. The ladies stared at her in dumb surprise. Prudence began to account for everything on the score of infirmity of mind. Mrs. Newman had lavished her strength too recklessly. She looked, poor thing! absolutely worn out. Jaqueline exclaimed: 'You are ill, you—suffer.'

'I suffer, yes; but I am not ill. Bear with me a few minutes longer. Then I shall go, and I—shall—not—come—back.'

The last words were sighed out, so mournfully that the tears came into Jaqueline's eyes. The sad face melted Prudence also. She was now quite sure that poor dear Mrs. Newman was the victim of an overstrained imagination. Certainly they would bear with her. She said with cheerful firmness:

'Of course you will come back. May I ring for a glass of wine? I perceive that this painful scene has been too much for you.'

'No, no, it is not that. Do you remember another painful scene which took place in this room, when Mary Mauleverer came here after—after Rosetta's death?'

'Mary told you of *that*?'

'Yes. She wished to tell you what I must tell you now, but she couldn't. I see now that it would have been kinder to have spoken out then, but she and I were thinking not of ourselves, but of you and the child.'

The low intensity of her voice, the sadness of her eyes, held the sisters beneath a spell of silence, but Prudence was saying to herself all the time: 'This poor creature is mad. We must be gentle with her.' Jaqueline had no such thought. Out of the darkness in which her puzzled wits were groping, light was coming. She had not recognised her sister yet, but her instincts,

less curbed than Prudence's, warned her this stranger was wearing some mask, and that the mask was about to be removed. Rosetta continued :

'Did not Mary hint to you that Rosetta's loveless marriage had exposed her to temptation?'

Prudence drew in her breath sharply; Jaqueline, leaning forward said eagerly, 'Yes.'

'And you,' Rosetta looked at Prudence, 'refused to consider the possibility of a woman, not too strong, passionate by nature, craving ardently kindness and sympathy, yielding to temptation.'

'I refused to consider it then, and I refuse to consider it now,' replied Prudence.

'Ah! And yet she did yield, God help her!'

Prudence's eyes flashed into fire. With her hands clenched and trembling, with bosom heaving, she exclaimed loudly :

'I refuse to believe it.'

'It is true. Because she knew that you would refuse to believe it, she—died.'

Prudence advanced a step, perhaps unconsciously. And at that moment light came to Jaqueline. She saw Rosetta in the flesh, the Rosetta she had tended as a baby, once the dearest object on earth to her. With a cry, she flung herself between the two women.

'Prudence,' she gasped. 'Can't you see, can't you understand? Rosetta has come back!'

'Are you mad too?'

But Jaqueline was about to emancipate herself for ever from the kindly but austere control of her senior.

'This is Rosetta!' she exclaimed.

Without waiting for a sign from the woman patiently standing beneath her own picture, Jaqueline threw her arms about Rosetta's neck, pressing her lips to hers, murmuring amidst her sobs: 'Oh, my darling, did you think that I would not forgive you? I—I don't care what you did. It is nothing, nothing to me.'

'Rosetta?' gasped Prudence. 'Rosetta is dead. Yes; they are mad. Jaqueline, what are you doing? What are you saying?'

Rosetta gently disengaged the clinging arms, as she confronted her sister and her judge.

'I am Rosetta. When I left my husband with Septimus

Lovibond, I became as one dead to him, and he wrote as much to you. His letter you interpreted literally. I returned to England to read my death notices. The world thought that I was dead, but the world knew that I had left Lord Brough before my death. The world has been kind enough to keep that knowledge from you.'

Then Prudence saw and believed, but she remained where she stood with her right hand clutching her breast. In a strained voice she muttered :

'You ran away with Septimus Lovibond?'

Rosetta bowed her head, but she felt Jaqueline pressing her hand.

'Abandoned your husband and child?'

'The child was with you. There was no place for her in her father's house, or in his heart. When Lord Brough died, I married Septimus. We assumed the name of Newman. Eighteen months ago Septimus died. That is all.'

'My God!'

Jaqueline glanced at the rigid face of Prudence, and burst out again :

'All that is nothing to me, nothing.'

'It is everything to me,' said Prudence.

'Prudence, you must believe that I should have remained dead, had it not been for my child. She shall not suffer as I have suffered. Convention, tradition are empty words to me. I shall give my Rose to the man who loves her, and whom she loves. Lord Brough never divorced me, and he died intestate. I could claim my right to a part of his estate now. Consent to the engagement of Derek and Rose, and I will go away—out of all your lives.'

Jaqueline was about to speak, but Rosetta held up her hand.

'Let Prudence answer,' she said quietly.

'Does Rose suspect?' Prudence asked hoarsely.

'No.'

Rosetta and Jaqueline gazed at her in silence. She was pallid, of the colour of ivory, and she seemed to the two women watching her to have grown suddenly very old. But she remained rigidly erect, as if petrified into stone. Her eyes were dull; her lips firmly compressed. The passion which had animated her a moment since had burnt itself out. Her voice was scarcely audible as she whispered :

'You would go away?'

'Yes.'

At that Jaqueline could contain herself no longer. She said clearly and finally:

'If Rosetta goes away, Prudence, I shall go with her.'

'You would leave me?'

'I can be as obstinate as you are.'

Prudence raised her heavy lids. A puzzled, dazed expression suffused her eyes, such a look as may be seen in the eyes of a child to whom suddenly a horror has been revealed. For the first time in her life this old woman seemed to be straining her sight, trying to penetrate beyond thickening mists. Her voice quavered as she muttered almost to herself:

'Why did you do this terrible thing?'

Rosetta was able to answer the question. Septimus and she had resolved the problem long ago.

'I will tell you, Prudence, although I despair of making you see with my eyes. You believe that you have acted according to your lights, but you forget that you never allowed your light to shine properly. I remember the day when I realised the symbolism of those drawn blinds.' She lifted her hand and pointed to the south windows. 'Why have those blinds remained down? Because you loathe Hog Lane—and all it represents, because the view from those windows reminds you of ugly facts. I was brought up by you in innocence and ignorance. I was taught to set an extravagant value upon refinement, upon the things of secondary importance in life. Those things may suffice some women, but I am not one of them. I am only half Mauleverer. In one sense, you were so kind to me, so devoted, so willing to sacrifice yourself for me, that I used to think my debt could never be paid; in another sense you were terribly cruel, because you kept me in the twilight which you loved, and then thrust me into blazing sunshine. Abominating evil, you brought yourself to believe that evil hardly existed for the Mauleverers. I know you were warned by a kindly soul before I married Lord Brough. You turned aside eyes and ears. You taught me what love was, you kept me in absolute ignorance of what hate might be. Till I was fifteen that was the right upbringing. After fifteen a girl ought to be taught what evil is, so that she may recognise it, even when disguised as good. I should have been less a sinner, Prudence, had you been less of

a saint. I sinned greatly, and God knows that I have been punished. Septimus and I loved each other to the end, but we were not happy. Women are not happy, as you taught me, because they are good; they are good, capable of expanding to the uttermost, when they are happy.'

'Yes,' said Jaqueline.

'You have made my Rose happy and good. I want her to go on being happy, and then the goodness will take care of itself. You have aroused an appetite for happiness, which must be satisfied. Victor Mauleverer will never satisfy it, never! Now—which is it to be? Am I to claim my child before all the world, or will you give her to the man she loves and let me go my way?'

Prudence did not answer. Her eyes left the face of the living woman and fixed themselves upon the portrait. Once more Rose felt the grasp of Jaqueline's hand, and through it there flowed to her heart a love that never failed, triumphant over all sin and suffering.

Prudence, open-eyed, stared at the portrait, and then at the worn face beneath it, incomparably finer than its youthful presentment. Again her right hand went to her bosom, and Jaqueline knew what the familiar gesture meant.

'You are in pain, sister?'

'It does not matter.'

'It does matter.'

Jaqueline hurried into the dining-room, to fetch a phial of *sal volatile*. Rosetta saw that the pain was increasing. At once, the desire to alleviate suffering, always an overmastering emotion, seized her. She gripped Prudence firmly, believing that she might fall, and supported her to the big chair. Prudence lay back, closing her eyes. Rosetta began to chafe her cold, limp hands; then, hardly conscious of what she was doing, she knelt down and began to kiss them, murmuring: 'Oh! Prudence, don't you want me, as I want you?'

Very faintly, Prudence whispered back:

'Yes.'

Victor Mauleverer did win a D.S.O. in South Africa; and Derek, also, went through the campaign as a war correspondent. Not till after his marriage with Rose did she learn the truth. And Derek insisted that it should be told to all Charminster.

Rosetta is known as Mrs. Newman, but she lives with her sisters at the Dower House. Derek is in Parliament; he owns The Cottage, and has added nurseries to it.

To-day, Mrs. Walkington drives through Hog Lane whenever she drinks tea with the sisters. But, as she remarked to Mrs. Hooton: 'Since the Devenishes bought up the slums and rebuilt the lower end of the Lane, I find difficulty in recognising it,' and Laura Hooton replied: 'Do you know that I urged upon them the propriety of calling it Rosemary Avenue, *so* appropriate, but dear Rose said that it would smell just as sweet under its old name.'

The blinds are up on the south front of the Dower House.

THE END.

ONE OF THE PUZZLES OF WATERLOO :
NAPOLEON'S SCAFFOLD.

BY W. H. FITCHETT.

THE article in a recent number of THE CORNHILL on ' Waterloo as Napoleon saw it ' brought me many letters, amongst them one dated from the Scottish Liberal Club, Edinburgh, in which the writer asked whether I ' could give him any explanation of an old coloured print ' in his possession, ' depicting the flight of the French army, and Napoleon getting out of his huge carriage to mount a white horse. The whole,' said my correspondent, ' is crude, and the colours very vivid ; still, why the scaffold ? ' The print, it seems, depicted a tall and massive scaffolding which, apparently, had been erected to enable Napoleon, from its top, to survey and direct the fight. The idea of such a scaffolding being used at Waterloo was to me quite novel, not to say absurd, and I wrote to my correspondent that ' his old print was unhistoric.' Art, in it, had rambled into fiction. Napoleon sat for the greater part of the battle at a table brought out from a cottage near, and on which was spread a map.

But a little later came a letter from another correspondent, this time from New Zealand. The writer, Dr. Philson, wrote, ' I have before me a book, " Letters of Sir Charles Bell " (London : John Murray, 1870). In a chapter of this book Bell tells how he visited the field of battle a few days after it was fought, and actually saw, and even climbed, a huge scaffold, which stood at the spot from which Napoleon directed the fight.' This was news to me, and I asked my correspondent to send me the book.

Sir Charles Bell was, perhaps, the most famous surgeon of his day. He visited Waterloo, as he explains, ' to improve his knowledge of gun-shot wounds,' and certainly he found unsurpassed opportunities of enlarging this field of knowledge in the human débris of Waterloo. He found himself in a complete landscape of wounded and dying men, volunteered his services, and toiled until his strength gave way, performing ' capital ' operations. He says :

' At six o'clock the next morning I took the knife in my hand, and continued incessantly at work till seven in the evening ; and so the second and third day.

All the decencies of performing surgical operations were soon neglected. While I amputated one man's thigh, there lay at one time thirteen, all beseeching to be taken next; one full of entreaty, one calling upon me to remember my promise to take him, another execrating. It was a strange thing to feel my clothes stiff with blood, and my arms powerless with the exertion of using the knife; and, more extraordinary still, to find my mind calm amidst such variety of suffering; but to give one of these objects access to your feelings was to allow yourself to be unmanned for the performance of a duty. . . . We had everywhere heard of the manner in which these men had fought—nothing could surpass their devotedness. In a long ward, containing fifty, there was no expression of suffering, no one spoke to his neighbour. There was a resentful, sullen rigidity of face, a fierceness in their dark eyes as they lay half covered in the sheets.'

In the wounds he treated, Bell found, written in grim characters, the fury and passion of the great fight. He says:

'The force with which the cuirassiers came on is wonderful. Here is an officer wounded; a sword pierced the back and upper part of the thigh, went through the wood-work and leather of the saddle, and entered the horse's body, pinning the man to the horse.'

Sir Charles Bell's whole account of the scenes he witnessed is picturesque and striking, and, as it must be unknown to most, it is worth while giving some passages from it:

THE FIELD OF WATERLOO.

'From a little beyond Brussels the road is through the forest of Soignies—fifteen miles to Waterloo; the road unencumbered, but by horrid smells. Waterloo, a quiet little village, in which all is already quiet and tranquil.

'Here we mounted—the forest still continuing. We at last emerged from the avenue, the field of battle opening before us to our right and left. The first note of our arrival on the scene was the disorder on the left-hand side of the road by the bivouac of horses, I suppose the draught-horses of the ammunition. A little further on we saw collected 132 pieces of fine French guns, I think of twelve and six long field-pieces, and ten-inch howitzers—beautiful cannon. Some of these were cast since Buonaparte's return, some in the time of Louis, and some had "Liberty and Equality" inscribed on them.

'Here we took guides, and turned off to the left of the road to Nivelles. Immediately on the right of the road there had been a tug of war, from the ground cut with hoofs and wheels, and the remains of ammunition. We advanced along the plateau to the centre of the British position. Along the whole brow of the elevated ground were many recently buried, very, very many graves, arms, knapsacks, hats, letters, books. It is inconceivable the numbers of such things strewn about. Riding over this hill we looked down upon Hougoumont. We returned to the farm of La Haye, where the Brunswickers kept possession for the greater part of the day; were destroyed, and the house battered with bullets. Ascending the plateau of —, we again descended to the right of his position upon the farm of Hougoumont. We walked round the narrow lane behind it, and entered where the Guards died. This beautiful farm, a complete thing, was set fire to by the rockets; it is burned and a ruin, all but one little corner, on which is written "the quarters of General Byng."

'The gate towards the south, and looking to the position of Buonaparte, is shattered with shot. The Guards here cut down the trees in front; some of the standing trees have sixty shot in them; the ground is ploughed, and the trees cut by shot. In rear of this position is a great heap of reeking bones, probably from the collection of the Guards. In front, and at the south gate within the wood, a very large heap of buried bodies; the French were repulsed in their repeated attacks upon this point. . . .

'From the farm of Hougomont we rode over rising ground, covered with standing corn, and through the field we could still observe the movements of the French making streets through the fields, leaving the corn neat, cut as it were, no straggling. They must have moved on in deep column and in numbers, completely to beat the corn into the ground. About half a mile of ascent brought us to the position of Buonaparte.

'This is the highest ground in the Pays Bas. A noble expanse is before the eye, and the circumstance of the ground still imprinted with the tyrant's foot, the place where the aides-de-camp galloped to and fro, the whole extent of this important field under the eye, fill the imagination.

'I climbed up one of the pillars of the scaffolding, as I was wont to do, after birds'-nests, but I found me more heavy. We got a ladder from the farm-court; it reached near the first platform. I mounted and climbed with some difficulty; none of the rest would venture, so I feel rather youthful.

'The view magnificent, I was only one-third up the machine, yet it was a giddy height. Here Buonaparte stood surveying the field. What name for him but—Macbeth, a man who stands alone! There is something magnificent in this idea; then, exalted to a giddy height; and how much further to fall than to the ground? his friends dispersed, his squadrons broken, all in *déroute*; and well he knew—for he seems to know mankind well—he knew the consequence.

'He must have turned to the right of the scaffolding and joined the road, the Chaussée, a little to the side of La Belle Alliance. There he must have met the wreck of his forces. A little further on the road his carriage was found.

'This position of Buonaparte is most excellent; the machine had been placed by the side of the road, but he ordered it to be shifted. The shifting of this scaffolding shows sufficiently the power of confidence and the resolution of the man. It is about sixty feet in height. I climbed upon it four times the length of my body, by exact measurement, and this was only the first stage. I was filled with admiration of a man of his habit of life, who could stand perched on a height of sixty-five feet above everything, and contemplate, see, and manage such a scene. Already silence dwells here; for although it is midday, and the sun bright and all shining in gladness, yet there is a mournful silence contrasted with the scene which has been so recently acting. No living thing is here—no kites, no birds of any kind; nothing but a few wretched women and old men, scattered on a height at a distance, and who are employed in gathering balls.

'We descended towards the south-east, crossing the road from Genappes. On a rising ground to the right of the road must have been the bivouac of the French before the battle—the fields quite broken down, ox-heads, rumps, veal, pigs, sheep, half-mangled and eaten, sticks and the fires and comforts snatched, for the place indicates an immense mass of men in *peaceable* possession. Where there are the marks of men further towards Waterloo, there are marks of struggle, loss, and *déroute*. We now crossed the road, and making a circle round the cottage of La Belle Alliance, came upon the ground occupied by the French during the battle "en potence."

'From this, down the hill, opposite the British heights, there has been much

destruction of life. The balls are thickly strewn; the letters, books, caps, halters pack-saddles, etc., cover the whole ground. The Prussians must have broken in here, and the marks of the horses' hoofs all in direction to the *Chaussée de Genappes*.

'Picking up these letters, you are at once carried home to the cottage of the poor fellow who fell. It is a letter from his father or his mother. We found letters which he had received when he was in Spain. There seems to have been a little book of *manceuvres* which is the code of the French soldiers. We found many. I picked up one stained with blood. I shall preserve it for the sake of the commentary written in the annals of this bloody day.

'Every French soldier carries a little book of the receipt of pay, without which he cannot receive anything. It is a printed form, and in the beginning is a code of military punishments. It was very remarkable—indeed, most extraordinary—without knowing this, without alighting and examining the books—to find that wherever French had been slain there lay a library in confusion. The letters were all French and German, with very little exception. . . .

'In ascending the heights to the left of Mont St. Jean, we saw the marks of the great tug of war—the mortal strife—here Ponsonby fell—here Picton—Colonel Hay. . . .

'I have just returned from seeing the French wounded received in their hospital. When laid out naked, or almost so, 100 in a row of low beds upon the ground, though wounded, low, exhausted, though beaten, you would still conclude with me that those were fellows capable of marching, unopposed, from the west of Europe to the east of Asia. Strong, thick-set, hardy veterans, brave spirits and unsubdued, they cast their wild glance upon you, their black eyes and brown cheeks finely contrasted with their fresh sheets; you would much admire their capacity of adaptation. These fellows are brought from the field after lying many days on the ground, many dying, many in agony, many miserably racked with pain and spasms, and the fellow next to him mimics him and gives it a tune. "Ah, ha ! vous chantez bien !" How they are wounded you may see in my notes.

'But I must not have you to lose this present impression upon me of the formidable nature of these fellows—as exemplars of the race of France. It is forced praise, for from all I have seen and all I have heard of their fierceness, their cruelty, and bloodthirstiness, I cannot convey to you my detestation of this race of trained banditti. Whether they are to be put to the sword, or kept in subjection until other habits come upon them, I am convinced that these men cannot be left to the bent of their propensities.

'I was struck with the words of a friend. "I saw," said he, "that man returning from the field on the 16th(?). (This was a Brunswicker, of the Black or Death Hussars;) he was wounded, and his arm amputated on the field; he was among the first who came in; he rode straight and stark upon his horse, the bloody clouts about his stump, pale as death, but upright, with a remarkable stern expression of feature, as if loth to lose his revenge." These are troops very remarkable in their fine military appearance, their dark dress, strong manly features, and fair moustaches, which give a more than usual character of fierceness.'

The evidence of Sir Charles Bell as to Napoleon's scaffolding is exact, detailed, and final. He not only saw the scaffold; he climbed it. It was a huge erection, over sixty feet in height. What was the genesis and what the use of this curious structure?

It seems unthinkable that Napoleon found it standing there, erected by some farmer as a jest or a toy, when he arrived on the

field. For any local purpose such a structure, on the sloping farm-lands round La Belle Alliance, would have been as useless as a toy without being an amusing tale. But Napoleon could not have improvised this towering and massive perch *after* he reached the field. He arrived on the ground late at night, was busy, in the darkness and rain, arranging his plan of battle till past midnight, rode along the line of his army at 9 o'clock next morning, and began his attack before noon. There was certainly no time for the construction of a solid and towering scaffolding for the purpose of an outlook. If constructed by the French, for use as an outlook during the battle, the timber for the scaffolding must have been carried in the train of the army, in readiness for erection before the fight began. But that, too, seems unthinkable. Napoleon, it is true, was conscious of his loss of physical energy. He was no longer the man of Arcole, of Marengo, of Austerlitz; he could not sit in the saddle for hours continuously. Did he make provision for that defect by the device of a scaffold? The whole question is a puzzle; a conflict of incredibilities.

The scaffold on any theory as to its origin accentuates the difference betwixt the two opposing captains at Waterloo. Wellington was on horseback almost from dawn till, in the gathering darkness, he parted company with Blücher in front of La Belle Alliance, and rode slowly and sadly back to his headquarters. During the fight he was present in turn at each point of danger. Wherever the fight was fiercest, and the slender British front seemed most likely to be broken, there was Wellington on Copenhagen. Napoleon, on the other hand, remained at one point practically for the whole of the day. Many witnesses describe him as sitting for hours in a chair in front of the table, sometimes with his head fallen forward, asleep. When he wished to get a wider view of the field, it may be supposed that, with panting breath, he climbed that scaffold. Or *did* he climb it? Was it intended, like the crow's nest on a whaling ship, for some sharp-eyed aide-de-camp—the perch of an outlook?

It is curious, however, how completely that huge scaffolding, as part of Napoleon's equipment at Waterloo, has slipped out of literature. The present writer knows the literature of Waterloo reasonably well, but frankly confesses never to have heard of this wonderful scaffold till his correspondents from Edinburgh and Auckland brought it under his notice. Can any reader of these lines recall, in any account of the Battle of Waterloo he has ever read, a description of Napoleon's scaffold at Waterloo?

TOWARDS ARARAT.

[TRAVELLING last summer from Russia towards Ararat, a young English girl and her brother found themselves on the Caspian Sea, and the letters written home day by day, from places so far from the beaten track of travellers, will surely attract and interest the readers of the Magazine.—ED. CORNHILL.]

ALL the ship-loaders and cargo-men of the Caspian Sea are Persians. I have never seen a more beautiful lot of men than they are, with their lovely oval faces and distinctly classical necks. They wear loose white tunics, tied round with some brilliant-coloured scarf, and handkerchiefs wound in a turban round their heads. Louis and I love watching them as they carry great basket-loads of fruit from one ship to another, shouting and singing as they spring from plank to plank. We had to change into a larger ship this evening, and coming upon these men at night and out at sea one imagined them to be pirates or smugglers, they looked so daring and adventurous. I am sure they dance mad dances among themselves and sing wild drinking-songs.

We have about three hundred Russian peasants on board, who are being shipped from the Volga district to Petrovsk, where they are more wanted. They are mostly fisherfolk, and they lie literally one on top of another, the poor pale-faced babies tied to their mothers' backs, weeping piteously. The floors of all decks are one mass of humanity. They look like a lot of tired, dirty children. Directly outside my window I can see them as they huddle closer together and prepare for sleep, and we soon realise how painfully restless a night with these peasants can be.

We talked to-night with a retired Russian naval colonel, who is now Chief Navigation Inspector to the northern part of the Caspian Sea. He is a very interesting man and extremely attractive. I asked him if he spoke English. 'Mademoiselle,' he said, 'I write poetry in English,' and thereupon he recited his verses.

He is horrid about our attempting Ararat—in fact, everyone

has thought us two silly and foolhardy young people. We hear endless stories of the Kurds who murder, of the brigands who carry one off, and of the robbers who rob; and when we say we shall have an escort of Cossacks to protect us, we are told that that is the greatest danger of all, for Government men are killed wherever they go! We listen with little thrills, but we are determined to attempt it, or at any rate to take the advice of the people who are nearer Ararat itself; for Russians know nothing about travelling and have an enormous power of exaggeration and particularly love telling *me* blood-curdling stories.

It is curious the amount of birds there are that fly on deck. Some of them are so fragile-looking, I wonder how they have had the strength to fly so far from land.

At Petrovsk we spent a day with our Russian colonel, who took us to his home and introduced us to his wife and children. His lovely daughter of about fifteen, with her two long golden pigtailed hanging over her shoulders, spoke the most exquisite French, and to everything I told her I was going to see, she said, 'Mais, m'selle, ce n'est pas joli—Là, il n'y a rien à voir. Ça, ce n'est pas intéressant!' She would not allow herself to wonder or be surprised at anything, but she was very attractive. I think St. Petersburg was her ideal. She told me that Russians never eat pigeon, for the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a Dove.

Louis and I were awake the following morning to see the sun rise over the Caucasus Mountains—we saw the sun rise but we could not see the mountains. We can just see the lower part of the long range, but above all is mist and clouds. I simply long for some bellows or something to blow the clouds away. Here everything is green and prosperous, the country is well cultivated, and what is particularly lovely to see is the miles and miles of land given up to huge crops of sunflowers. On either side, as far as the eye can reach, is nothing but a blaze of golden sunflowers. The Tcherkese, or Circassians, who are among the many different peoples of the Northern Caucasus, wear the most splendid and becoming costume I can imagine for a man. Its main feature is the tcherkesska, which is a long frock coat cut to shape, and belted round at the waist with a beautiful wrought silver or metal chain, hanging from which are numerous daggers elaborately sheathed in ivory and silver. Every man is armed

to the teeth. On their head is a high bushy lamb-skin cap, and they look real brigands and mountain-men, and above all war-like. They are tall and dark complexioned, and coming straight, as we have, from the Russians, they strike us as being 'grown-ups' and not children. But I like the Russians better.

The Tcherkese are mostly Mohammedans, and the few women I have seen are small, over-worked, betrodde-looking creatures. Apparently the woman is the only worker of the two, and as she marries when she is still only a child and at once starts her life of toil, she becomes old and worn-looking at twenty years of age.

Louis has made friends with an enormous fat Armenian and they are talking German together. He has made Louis a present of a few handfuls of cigarettes and looks ready to give him anything else he might like. Meanwhile I talk to a young Cossack, who has become rather a nuisance, but I rather like him, for he tells me he worships the country and mountains, and hates his barrack life at Rostov. He is a Tcherkese and was born in the Caucasus.

Before the sun had risen Louis and I had left Vladicaucas and were on our way climbing the mountains in a tiny 'phaeton' drawn by three skinny little Tcherkese horses.

Suddenly out of the dawn, Kazbek! Beautiful Mount Kazbek appeared, all rosy and glowing with the rising sun. One by one the white crests of the mountains come bursting out of the darkness until we can see the entire range stretching along the southern horizon to Mount Elbruz, the dull white masses standing out in sharp contrast to the clear and transparent morning sky. They are angry, savage mountains, and do anything but smile down on you, and as we slowly climb up the deep narrow gorge of the Terek we can say nothing to each other, we are so overawed with the endlessness of their beauty. The incessant rattle of the swift and tawny Terek completely drowns whatever sense of loneliness one might have in the midst of this savage scenery. To-day even at some 600 feet above the gorge, the clatter reached us of the river rolling on in its irresistible mass down the valley.

In the little village of Kazbek one still feels on the steppe level, for the mountains have not softened in any degree and they rise even further into the sky. Yet we are over 5,000 feet high. Here the inhabitants are Georgians, and they are evidently the aristocrats of the Caucasus. They are

very distinguished and dignified, and they say they are older than the Egyptians. They are lovers and writers of poetry, and great hero-worshippers. They are intellectual to a frightening degree, very imaginative and totally unambitious and lacking in modern enterprise. Their national patriotism has become a perfect fetish, lately accentuated by their hatred of the Russians, who are doing all they can to drown this traditional spirit. I once called a Georgian a Russian, which is as stupid as calling an Irishman an Englishman.

General Kazbek, who is the prince of the place and owns half Mount Kazbek, is a great character. He is very amusing, and the talk runs riot when he and his two brothers are together. We have most of our meals with the family and I spend my time blushing at his compliments. But to-day it is the mountains, and only the mountains, that make the background of all our thoughts and feelings.

We climbed 5,000 feet up to the Kazbek Glacier, and sitting on a great overhanging rock, an extraordinary unreasonable joy came over me and I was filled with love and light. I was changing every second from something minute and microscopic to something huge and expansive, and then I was everything and everybody. In fact I was in the world, and infinity was in my hand.

I am radiantly happy and simply love the universe. I have long talks with Hélène Kazbek about Tolstoy and Dostoieffsky. As a writer she admires Tolstoy, but not as a man—I don't think she can see the truth that was always before Tolstoy, or rather I don't think she *believes* it to be a truth—'Truth can never be told so as to be understood and not be believed.' I believe this truth is at times before us all—it is an ever-straining within after unity and harmony, a desire to harmonise the inharmonies in our life. Tolstoy is blamed that to the end he should still have been seeking and not ever have reached that to which he was aspiring. It seems to some people to be a useless waste of time to have an ideal where, at the end, there is nothing to gain but the truth. Tolstoy had one splendid faith, I think, and that was, that all humanity would be as eager as himself to welcome this truth, and he risked reputation, fame, and possessions, in order to expound it. What his soul *knew* to be true was true—he had faith.

I have spoken for a few minutes to a very impulsive Russian lady and her daughter, and they ended by giving me a huge water-melon and a bunch of grapes, and then disappeared in their motor-car. As I walked away with my melon under my arm, I felt like one of those Mussulmen who are never without an umbrella under one arm and a melon under the other. I shall hate leaving the mountains, and the thought of journeying farther south depresses me horribly.

The distance between Kazbek and Tiflis is about 120 miles, and so instead of taking three days over it in a 'phaeton' we came by car, which I thought at first would be dreadful, but as I found the occupants were all Russians except ourselves, I did not mind. Something happened with the motor and we were on the roadside for about two hours, and I was very much struck with the fact that there was no annoyance, grumbling, or blaming the chauffeur—nothing of this at all from any of the people, as there would most certainly have been had they been anything but Russian.

From Kazbek the mountains were ragged and jagged to an extreme. The more grotesquely rough, the more fierce and forbidding they become, the less they are marked by the characteristics of civilised life, the greater becomes my sense of freedom and the more I love them. Everywhere the bare mountain-side is coloured a rich dark orange, and mineral waters come gushing down over the rocks. The natural wealth of the Caucasus is endless, and it is as yet absolutely undeveloped and untouched by capitalists and enterprising money-makers. As we near the foot of the mountains, the great heights gradually become thickly wooded hills, and villages with ancient towers and ruined walls (reminding me rather of the kind of villages one passes between Nürnberg and Rothenburg) lie about on the hilltops. Great flocks of shaggy sheep occupy the road, and marching before them are shepherds in tattered sheep-skin coats and huge sheep-skin caps, carrying long crooked staffs, and looking very like Old Testament characters.

Looking down upon Tiflis from above, one would think that the town lay among sandy desert-like hills, but one has only to go some twenty miles away into the country to find that these same hills are naturally thickly covered with abundant vegetation, and it is merely the stupid cutting down of the trees that

gives the country around Tiflis such a melancholy and ugly appearance.

Early this morning Louis and I found ourselves at the small Armenian village Karakliss, where, by the 'chevaux de poste,' we hoped to cover the sixty miles to Lake Goktcha in one day. We have brought with us from Tiflis a Persian boy, who is our interpreter. He can speak French, Russian, Armenian, and Persian all equally well. He is very servile and disgustingly apologetic. I can imagine massacring that kind of person. It is always 'Mais, comme vous voulez, m'selle,' and I am consequently perfectly horrid to him.

The villages we pass through as we gradually mount the great Armenian plateau are each one a perfect example of either a Russian, Armenian, or Georgian village; each quite distinct from the other, and therefore strongly characteristic. In the Russian villages the people do look such babies compared with their neighbours. They look as if they were in the dark, as if they were being kept away from something that they were hungry for.

As we rise higher and higher we can see over great stretches of rolling, thickly wooded hills, and great shaggy eagles float about over the tree-tops. There is something wildly lovely and very aloof as they wheel slowly round in the darkening sky. Once on the top of the plateau, everything changes and there is nothing but a great plain with no tree to be seen anywhere. It is bitterly cold and we sit frozen in our tiny carriage. We pass extraordinary villages—villages that at first look like so many stacks of hay and dried manure, but when close to, we see under each stack a tunnel leading into the bowels of the earth like a rabbit-hole, and in the doorway of these holes stand strange-looking people, like the pictures you see of prehistoric men, wearing nothing but a very short sleeveless skin jacket out of which protrude their long skinny hairy legs and arms. They have funny dark faces, and their shock of shaggy hair gives to them a wild and uncouth look. I cannot think what these people are. They are just wild mountain-men. Mikael, our small guide, says they are not Kurds, and I know that Kurds live only on the tops of the mountains, for Mikael has shown us their encampments. The Kurds are nomadic shepherds who stray from hill-top to hill-top with their great flocks of sheep, and are rarely seen or heard of in the valleys, save when they come down to

plunder and to rob some unfortunate village, and they are apparently the most lawless people in the world.

It was wonderful coming upon Lake Goktcha in the moonlight. Suddenly, like a vision, this beautiful piece of water lay before us. There was something enchanted and unearthly about it. The water was so deep and blue and clear, and the hills around were so faint and ghostly that they looked as if at any moment they might disappear. I thought of Undine—I am sure strange tales and legends are told among the peasants here, for the air is full of imagination.

When we reached Yelenovka, the tiny village on the edge of this lake where we were to spend the night, we were shown into a room with three prison-like trestle-beds with no pretence at a covering. We wrap ourselves warmly round with rugs, and Mikael at once begins to snore loudly. I get up and ask him if he can sleep with a little less noise, and he says, 'Comme vous voulez, m'selle,' and goes on snoring.

The dogs of the place are so fierce and savage that Louis and I dared hardly move about in the village this morning. They come at you like a great pack of wolves, snarling and growling and waving their great bushy tails in a most terrifying way. Driving along the little dusty road to the Governor's house, we overtake a poor shuffling wretch, with handcuffed hands and sore-looking bare feet, being driven along by a mounted Cossack who, with his rifle across his shoulder and his knotted whip, urges the prisoner to walk faster. They too are going to see the Governor.

We also pass an extraordinary-looking creature being led along by a peasant. He is not human, although he has put a loose shirt over his dreadful body; his face is that of an animal and his expression is awful. I ask Mikael what he is. 'Oh, c'est un sauvage—il habite les montagnes.' When I see him later in the village he is amusing the peasants by making silly noises, and his laugh is like the barking of a dog. A Cossack comes along and jokingly points his gun at him. This strange man lifts up his shirt and I see him running like a child, with little steps, in the direction of the mountains. Mikael says there are lots of people like that who live in the mountains. They cannot talk, and I suppose they live on roots.

Now and then we pass the carcasses of dead oxen and horses

lying about near the road-side, and I have just seen a big dead white horse being eaten into by a dog: and close to, on the telegraph wires, sat a hawk and two eagles waiting for the dog to have finished.

Louis suddenly says 'Look there!' and I see Ararat! Oh, it is wonderful as it rises out of this great low plain. We stand up in our carriage in our excitement, and simply gaze and gaze.

I have seen so many beautiful things, but now I think that Ararat is the loveliest thing in Nature that can be conceived. It is so full of feeling, and one feels it like one does a human being.

We are gradually descending to this wonderful valley of the Araxes, and we can see the little town of Erivan, which surprises us by its beauty. For we were told by everyone not to go to Erivan, it being such a dull, ugly, dry little place, but it is really the most lovely oasis, a perfect garden of flowers and fruits, and all along the river tall poplars rise up into the sky. Lovely pale-blue birds flit about, looking as if they had fallen from the sky, and in the sunset light their wings change opalescent colours and fill us with joy. We walk out into the dimly lighted streets, and find ourselves plunged into the atmosphere of the East. Large fat Turks go ambling by on their Arab horses. Tall Persians with graceful figures stand in groups about the road. Tiny donkeys move miraculously under huge loads of terra-cotta pitchers. Dark figures sit squatting in cave-like rooms, where glints a glorious glow of carpets and silks; veiled women flit quickly past and disappear round the corners, and everywhere is the incessant hum of mosquitos and gnats.

We drive out of Erivan the next morning on the floor of a little ramshackle cart, which is literally a small wooden box set on four rickety old wheels, with a tiny ledge fixed near the tails of the horses for the driver and Mikael. We dance about all over the road, and are jolted and tossed with the apples at the bottom of the cart. Mikael laughs nervously at us, and is a little uncomfortable, for he thinks he is slightly lowering both his and our dignity.

This lovely valley is a perfect paradise for every kind of water-bird and animal. The muddy streams are full of tortoises, great big ones and tiny little ones. They sun themselves on the

marshy banks, and as one rattles by they quickly flop back into the water, and one sees them swimming along with their funny little faces just peering above the slimy surface.

Elegant, long-legged birds stand about like so many statues. Great cotton-fields where pods are bursting with fluff, lie on every side, and underneath, melons peer out, glinting amber and gold. Little naked dark-skinned children dance in and out of the water, teasing the great oxen who lie wallowing in the mud like great hippopotami. We pass through the narrow streets of mud villages, and over the walls hang the laden branches of fruit-trees. Strings of camels dawdle across the plain with tall swinging figures in attendance, telling of the desert and the great silence.

The air is full of poetry and music, and no one can imagine a more lovely country than this is.

Ararat stands like a vast cathedral on the floor of this open plain, and the pyramid of Little Ararat rising directly from the upland valley, lends to the whole thing a unity and a harmony that is perfect. It is a wonderful vision of natural architecture.

We visit an old Armenian monastery at Etchmiadsin, and wander about the church and cloisters with one of the chief priests. He is very big and hard. He tells us of the difficulties in mounting Ararat and thinks us very inexperienced. This monastery is the earliest of all Armenian monasteries, and dates from 302 A.D.

The Armenians say that the Gospel was preached to their ancestors by the first Apostles, and that they were the first people to adopt Christianity as the religion of the country.

Here there is a famous treasury in which many holy relics are kept—unfortunately we are not allowed to see them, for the key to this treasury belongs to the Patriarch of Etchmiadsin alone, and he has recently died and as yet no one has been appointed in his place. Mikael says we should have seen the head of the spear wherewith the Roman soldier pierced the side of Christ; also a fragment of Noah's Ark. After some hours we arrive at the large village of Igdir, where we hope to obtain Cossacks, but we are told that the chief officer is taking his afternoon sleep and must on no account be disturbed. Eventually we are brought before him, but he is still only half awake, and as he sips his tea, tells us that he can do nothing for us, but suggests our moving to another village. It is with

great difficulty that we can persuade anyone to take us further before the morning, for time, which we hold as somewhat precious, simply does not exist here. When trying to fix on a time for anything we are stared at in amazement, and thought very ignorant of the ways of the people. As Mikael says: 'A une heure ou bien à deux heures, ça ne fait rien à quelle heure!' He himself is rather a hopeless person to journey with, for, making friends at every small stopping-place, he does his very best to dissuade us from moving further, his great pleasure being to show us off to as many villagers as he can assemble together, guarding over us wherever we go and telling with great pride to all the curious, how he has sole charge over this strange pair.

At last we manage to find a driver, and after a few hours' rattling along in the dark we arrive at the door of another Cossack station. We are shown into a room where sits the head officer.

He is very frightening, with two revolvers lying on his desk. He shows a lot of temper with our driver when he asks an enormous sum for driving us further, but like all the officials he is mostly show-off, for this is perhaps his only chance of leaving his impression on a European. He has certainly left a very nasty one. As he curses our man, with his loaded revolver in his hand, I wonder whether if he attempted to shoot I should have the courage to try and wrest it from him. And I wonder whether Louis would. I am awfully frightened, and when once outside the house I love our driver more than anyone else. Our night is spent in a room with lots of mosquitos, and so we fix up our nets for the first time.

Just outside our door is another door, not a very strong one, with a small barred window to it; it is the prison cell. Lying in a heap upon the floor are three Kurds—all murderers, waiting to be taken to Erivan. Mikael takes a delight in telling me of all the gruesome stories and of every horrible murder that takes place in these villages. I know that it is simply because he is a coward and does not want to go any further, and he hopes to frighten me by saying in a flippant way, 'Mademoiselle, la vie, ce n'est rien!' There is a prisoner who has just been let out to pray in the yard; they always pray unguarded in the yard. This man took a young girl up into the mountains. Mikael would say, 'Une jeune fille, ce n'est rien.'

We leave the village this morning with two young Cossacks, who career about on their spirited little horses, bullying and frightening every person on the road. They shout and curse at everyone, and make themselves hated all round. Their order is maintained solely by brute force, and the effect they must have on the people could not be worse.

Partly because I envied them their horses and partly because I wanted things to go more peacefully, I asked one of the Cossacks to change places with me and for me to ride. Louis very soon did the same and the two men were soon gaily singing and smoking on the seat of the 'phaeton.'

We arrive at Aralikh, where the driver refuses to take us further, and so we must find horses and ride the rest of the way. Cossacks and soldiers go out in every direction in search of horses, but return saying that the Mussulmans will not lend them us at any price. We wait all day in the room of this little station where there is a constant flow of prisoners and soldiers, all the justice being in the hands of a young Russian, an extraordinary good and just-looking person with a lovely smile, and according to Mikael, this man is loved by everyone. He sits at his table, and before him stand Turks, Kurds, and Persians; all have been fighting, and one man undresses and shows his bruised back to us. In the cell sits a man who was arrested yesterday. His brother has murdered and is still at large, while this man is taken and locked up. He is a Kurd.

The soldiers return with three horses that have been taken by force; no other way would get them.

As we ride through the village in the early morning we see the large carcase of a bullock lying on the roadside, and the village butcher is there with his big chopper; he bends over the body and chops off small bits of meat for the men and boys who crowd round holding their little wooden plates.

Our horses are bony and skinny, altogether ragged-looking. The saddles are uncomfortable, and after a time the road is so rough and steep that we walk and lead them. The silence of the mountain is astonishing—there is no rippling of water anywhere—only the faint whistling of the wind. As we wend our way up the steep mountain-side we are suddenly brought to a halt by the first and only disagreeable Russian we have as yet come across. He is a General, or if not a General, to judge by

his medals and his following of soldiers, he is someone of importance. He asks us our business and rudely demands the Governor's letter which we had given up at the village below. He forbids us to move a step further until we can show him this letter. As he abuses our Cossacks for having brought us up here, he cannot keep his eyes off me in my odd costume, seated astride on my dismal-looking horse. At intervals he salutes us majestically though we both sit furiously silent, glaring at him for all we are worth and not understanding a word he says! Eventually he leaves us to argue with our party as to what course to take, and we greatly astonish them all when we calmly dare to defy so terrible a person, and so continue our way with a rather more admiring following!

Mikael beats and bullies his ruin of a horse and gets his due by a nasty kick on the leg, and so he comes limping after us, crying out at our foolhardiness in venturing further. Louis' horse finds himself for a minute free, and is so overjoyed that he starts hurling himself down the mountain-side and my pillow and rugs are tossed up in the sky and down again. We come upon a sight which must be unique even in the most wild and uncivilised parts of the world. It is a simple Kurd village. In the cold bare ground are planted tall posts upholding pieces of matting and old skins, and serving as but scanty shield to the bitter blasts that blow down from the great domes of snow.

Little naked children come laughing round us, flashing their white teeth and clutching at the blue beads that hang in long strands round their necks.

Sheeps-skins lie stretched out upon the ground, and long thin men, something like Red Indians, sit with their brown chests showing bare from out the many-coloured tatters draped about their shoulders and waist. Some of them, like our guide, who is a Kurd, dye their hair and beard a fiery red, which gives them an extraordinary wild and unkempt look. There is an air of distinguished pride about these men. They are free; independent to the core. Their race has always and does still mix with no other race, and no law or religion has ever touched them. As far as one knows, they seem always to have roamed as they now roam over the slopes of the great hills of Asia Minor—pitching their goat-skin tents wherever they rest, chanting wild airs, with neither a past to remember nor a future to plan for.

There is only one house up on this little upland valley, and that is a small square ugly-looking Russian frontier station.

The little Georgian commander gives us a room and tells me that I am the first lady that has ever ventured up Ararat. One of the officers writes poetry, and all over the walls of his bedroom are long verses in Georgian—I wish I could read them. It is bitterly cold and I sleep in all my clothes. We have not washed for days, and I ask Mikael if there is a chance of my finding any water. 'De l'eau,' he says, 'mais, comment donc. Pourquoi?' My question is evidently stupid, and so I decide to go dirty and warm. I am very excited and feel at the very climax of my life! Ararat has become in my mind the end of all things, and I feel strong—of unknown strength!

The terrible storm, the dense blizzard and bitter blast that was blowing up at Sardar Bulakh the following morning, forced us sorrowfully to retrace our steps down to the great plain again, and to abandon all hope of perhaps reaching the summit of the great mountain. We should have waited up there another day or two on the chance of more favourable weather, but we were told that this was unlikely, for when once the weather breaks, it is useless to expect brighter days before the summer.

We are sleeping to-night in a tiny village inn at Kamarlu, and hope to catch the train to Tiflis early to-morrow morning.

To-day we see Ararat for the last time. Her great dome, dazzlingly beautiful by the freshly fallen snow, breaks through the black storm-clouds that circle round her in awful threatening, and seems almost to shower light upon the mists below.

We are up here at Patara Tsemi among the lovely hills that surround the little watering-place Borjom, which apparently is the 'Carlsbad' of Georgia. This sanatorium of Dr. Hambashidzi's must be the greatest joy and blessing during the summer to all those poor mothers and delicate children of the hot unhealthy towns around here. Happy children of all nationalities run about under the care of Dr. Hambashidzi, who with his keen enthusiasm, enterprise, and obvious success, carries on this work under the suspicious eyes of the Russians, whose object is apparently to put every difficulty imaginable in the way of all enterprising Georgians, in order that they should be as dependent and powerless as their own people. To some extent they succeed, for, as far as we can see, these Georgians rather lack the kind of

stuff which is essential if they are to hold their own against the tyrannies of the Russian system. They are slowly being ejected from all positions of importance in their country, and Armenians and Greeks put in their stead.

Naturally, there reigns a widespread hatred of the Russians, and the plots to win back their rights and freedom only result in greater suppression and worse tyranny.

Staying here with his two children is an ex-Socialist member of the Duma, who we find is a great admirer of Aunt Bo's [Mrs. Sidney Webb] and has read some of her books. He is very anxious to visit England.

I just now asked Dr. Hambashidzi why he did not wear the national dress, and he says that some years ago, when he was a student in Moscow, he met Tolstoy on three different occasions, and each time Tolstoy said: 'What can induce you to wear that ridiculous costume?' and although Dr. Hambashidzi was rather annoyed at the remark, he resolved never to wear such a barbarous-looking dress again!

We are in the typical and unspoilt old Georgian town of Kutáís. Here, more than anywhere else in Georgia, are all the national traditions fostered. Reformers and newspapers encourage the gradual drawing away from all Russianising influences, and the spirit of this little place lives unmodernised and uncorrupted by the hated rule of Russia.

As in most of these towns, each street has its own speciality. Swords are forged in one street, cloth is woven in another. The shoe-making street provides shoes only, and in this street great stacks of raw hides lie all over the road, and your shoe is made for you while you wait. The dealer squats on a piece of matting, with his wares hung around him, and works at his handicraft here, in the eyes of all men.

Batoum is typically Turkish, in spite of its being under the name of Russia! Turks everywhere—crowding in the doorways of little cabarets, squatting on the floors carelessly smoking their long pipes, spitting, and exchanging observations in low guttural tones. To-day was a lovely morning—so golden—blue and clear. We drive up into the luxuriant, tropically wooded hills which rise in sweeping curves tier on tier and push off into a wonderful dim sheen of rugged purple peaks. Coming down to the little port this evening we saw all the peasants praying in the fields.

It was extraordinarily impressive. I notice they always choose the most beautiful and lovely spots to pray in. We see the distant range of the Caucasus stretching far out to sea westwards. Cloud-banks merge with snow peaks, and it is a perfect world of vaporous whiteness. The sun drops slowly down into the deep green sea and the neighbouring hills are lit up with a light that tells of something unknown and terrible—the sky is brewing.

Four days later the travellers were in the Black Sea.

This coast of Asia Minor is a lovely coast. When one thinks of Asia Minor one imagines, or at least I imagined, it to be a dry and colourless part of the world. But it is green and redolent of vegetation. Velvety hills rise abruptly out of the sea and behind are tall shaggy mountains, untraversed by travellers and unspoilt by railways or roads. It is obviously a country with an old civilisation. The scenery is full of story and adventure, and the spirit of great heroes and wondrous deeds is in the air. We call at different ports as we go along—little old red-tiled houses, painted apricot colour, stand up against the water's edge. Brightly decorated gondola-shaped boats laden with nuts and fruits crowd round our steamer, and the incessant gabble of the Turkish sailors reaches one's ears. We row ashore at Samsoun and see wonderful men, Las's (of Lasistan) dressed in skin-tight high-waisted leggings with old embroidered waistcoats and long loose sleeves that hang in folds round their arms. Outside the mosques lie the armless and legless bodies of beggars, who dolefully chant in the minor key. It is always in the minor that they sing. At first the music struck me as being melancholy and joyless, but now I have found in it a certain spirit of mad gaiety, an exciting rhythm if not any true harmony. Everyone is tired and sleepy, for just now is the 'Ramazan,' which is the annual forty days' fast of the Mohammedan. From sunrise to sunset he must neither eat nor drink. As our captain says, during the night 'Ils font la noce!' and he is a lucky man who has no daylight work to do.

They are all Turks on board except ourselves and two French ladies. The unpleasant tone of these ladies drives us to the furthest corner of the ship, where we are led to compare the Western world with the quiet, natural dignity of the East.

MARY MEINERTZHEGEN.

THE ELEVENTH HOUR.

THE letter had reached Petrie that morning; it stood, now, propped before him on the breakfast-table, re-read, drunk in, absorbed a dozen pride-fostering, fibre-stirring, glorious, triumphant times. The thing that, deep down in his heart, he wanted more than anything else in the world had come to him at last—was his, to-day, for the taking, in this, the eleventh hour.

He had been asked to play for the county—the county—for Kent—for the blue-capped, white-horse-crested, sporting Saxon shire. And he was over thirty and had been neither to University nor Public School. No reputation earned in time of teens and twenties had been his to help. He had been at a despised Blackheath day-school, out of which great cricketers do not come. Petrie was a made bowler, not a born one. His swerve, out-lying Hirst's swerve, was the fruit of practice, solid and long-sustained. Its deadliness Bickley knew, and Beckenham and Eltham, and a host of Kentish clubs. Now first-class cricket would know it—and he would play for his county on his native Rectory Field.

On the Rectory Field, that battle-ground of heroes present, bygone, and to come—the *terrain* where, in boyhood, he had seen Grace bat and Lohmann bowl, and Stoddart, the prince of football, score innumerable tries.

A small success, a mean ideal, a little thing in the greater field, in the wider battle-ground of pulsing life? Perhaps. Yet something, surely, to have laboured and achieved, to be able to drink, at last, delight of battle with his new-found, welcoming peers. From duty and service, given whole-heartedly, even in the cause of sport, something, always, the giver saves and keeps. Petrie had kept physical fitness, dogged application to his daily work, and the instinct for playing the game cleanly in life as upon the pavilioned field.

So, then, the letter, the invitation to represent his county, was the crown of labour according to his lights. No wonder that his eyes feasted on it, that he sat there hugging the honour which had come to him, so unexpectedly, at last.

But banks—even the Bank of England, which is almost a

Government office—do not wait for their clerks. Petrie, folding the letter tenderly, put it into his pocket and rose. He rang the bell. The maid entered almost at once.

‘How is my mother this morning?’ he asked. ‘Have you taken her breakfast up?’

‘Yes, Mr. Malcolm. The mistress is not very well to-day. She’s had rather a bad night. She asked me to tell you that she was going to try to get a little sleep, and would you please not go up to her, if you didn’t mind.’

Petrie’s face fell.

‘Thank you, Mary,’ he said. And then, to himself, as the maid went out, ‘Poor old mater, I’m afraid she’s getting quite lazy. She’s always having breakfast in bed nowadays. But, hang it all, what a pity she can’t see me! I did want to tell her first!’

In another minute he had gone down the villa’s little path and was striding stationwards along the Shooters’ Hill Road. Soon he was out of the roadway, on to the ancient, grass-clad heath. On the right, above Greenwich Park’s red wall, the trees towered up, showing green and full-leaved in the fine cool clearness of that morning in mid-June. Before him the dip to the pond in which he had launched frail craft with his nurse’s aid; beyond the pond the Paragon, and, past Montpelier Hill, the spire of All Saints’ Church, stabbing the cloudless sky. And, behind him now, a little to the left, under the shelter of St. Germain’s Chapel, the plot that had once been his preparatory school’s cricket-ground—on which he had learned the rudiments of the game of games. It was at this that he looked incessantly as he drew village-wards, turning again and again. And memories of matches, of deeds done in battle against a certain rival school, came to him, singing each its song of pride. High-hearted and elate, he passed the pond, went up Montpelier Hill, then, casting one final glance at the pitch in the chapel’s shade, passed down into Blackheath Village and through the station hall.

There he bought a ‘Sportsman’—with a new thrill of pride. He bought it daily; but it held an added pleasure now. It was an earnest of splendid things to come, of the days when he would see his own name there, among names that were household words in the world of sport.

He hurried down the steps and walked on air towards a train that waited in a bay. Two men hailed him as he went.

'Hullo, Petrie. You rattled Beckenham out all right on Saturday. How many wickets was it? Seven or eight?'

'And a ripping good knock you took afterwards, by Jove. That window in the Pav. you smashed with a square-leg hit.—Who pays for it? You or the club?'

Petrie laughed happily.

'The club, of course. Hang it all, it wasn't my fault. If they *will* bowl a chap half-volleys six inches outside the leg stump, what can you expect?'

Then, as the others paused before a first-class carriage, he nodded and passed on. 'So long,' he said. 'See you some evening at the nets.' And, going further up the platform, he entered a second-class carriage and sat down. He opened his 'Sportsman'—but the paper stayed un-read.

People got in—people, happily, as he felt it, Petrie did not know. At Lewisham, St. John's, New Cross, others came in. But Petrie did not heed them—he hardly noticed the train pull up and go on. Between New Cross and Cannon Street, to the wheels' mad music, his brain sang to him its high and triumphing song—the song that each man who has compassed his heart's desire hears once at least in his little life.

'I am going to play for the county, the county, the county—on the "Field"—the Rectory Field.'

Such was the song's burden—sung by the brain of him to the vamping wheels. At Cannon Street he descended in a dream, slipped through Walbrook, crossed Cheapside by the Mansion House, and entered the sombre building in Threadneedle Street, going to the secretarial offices, where his duty lay.

'Has the chief come?' he asked a colleague.

The answer was in the affirmative. Petrie put his hat and stick into a cupboard; then went out of the room into a room beyond.

'Good morning, Petrie,' said the man in the chair.

'Good morning, sir. I should like to speak to you if I may.'

'By all means, my boy. What is it?' And the chief rose, stood striding the hearthrug, back to the empty fire. He was a bachelor, tall, florid, well-preserved, an old Rugby International between whom and Petrie—like calling to like—a strong, an ever-increasing sympathy existed, good both for underling and for the man who ruled.

'You told me once, sir, that if—that if ever I was asked—if

ever I got a chance of playing for Kent you would see that I got leave

There was no need for Petrie to say more. The other put out his hand. His clerk's hand met it, gripped it, held it hard.

'They've asked you! Jove, I *am* glad, Petrie. Of course you can get off. I'll see to that. When do you want to go?'

'On the first, sir. For the full three weeks. There's the northern tour, then a week at Tunbridge, and after that Surrey at Blackheath.'

'The Rectory Field. Your own hunting-ground. The Rectory Field'

His chief stopped short. Old hours were glimpsing on to him, old faces, old battles when youth was hot and muscle hard, and knees, good now for golf only, were very supple and strong. And he saw himself lying behind the goal-posts, hanging on to a ball that two Welsh forwards held—in the ancient days of the maul. And in his ears sounded the noise of thousands shouting their encouragement, so that the stir of it drove him to one great effort which wrung the ball from the Welshmen's grasp and he rolled upon it, making good the try that won, for England, the game. And after that the walking back to mid-field again while men clamoured their exultation and women in the tin-roofed, many-tiered stand waved handkerchiefs and cheered. The little things men care about make sentimentalists of them all. Which explains, perhaps, why Petrie's chief found words come to him with desperate difficulty now. When he did speak it was with body turned deskwards and with half-averted face.

'You may regard it as settled,' he said sharply, almost austere. 'I will put it through at once. Cut along and get on with those returns.'

Petrie stared, dumbfounded at the strange harsh tones. Then he understood. The old man was as pleased as Punch, but the news had brought his own memories crowding uncontrollably back. To-morrow—to-day, perhaps, after lunch—Gordon would send for him, would talk about it and about . . . Now he wanted to be left alone. Just that.

'Thank you, sir. Thank you very much.'

And Petrie, who had come into his kingdom, had gone. The 'old man,' whose kingdom knew him no more, save only as the veriest shadow of a name, sat staring at the map-hung wall. He was thinking of a red-plush, silver-tasselled, rose-crested

cap that topped a cherished photograph in a certain Richmond room.

After lunch he sent for Petrie—cynical as he had been sentimental before.

‘I’ve arranged things all right,’ he said. ‘I shall get young Brocklehurst to devil for me while you’re away. He’ll make an awful mess of things, of course, and you’ll have to buckle to when you come back, I can tell you. Perhaps you’ll feel like work when you’ve made a blob or two and been hit all over Old Trafford and Bramall Lane and Trent Bridge and the rest. I shall come and see Surrey have a go at you when the Blackheath match comes along. You won’t hustle Hobbs and Hayward out as you hustled out Eltham the other day. County cricket’s a mighty different thing!’

He pulled up short, laughed, and turned to the papers on his desk.

‘Now for work,’ he said. ‘Got your note-book? Right! Take these letters down. I want them ready for signature to-day.’

He began to dictate at a high rate of speed. He was as efficient as any man in the building, and when people complimented him upon the way in which he got through his correspondence he would say, stoutly, that there was no such business training as sustained, solid, first-class play.

When, at last, Petrie rose and walked doorwards with his sheaf of notes, old Gordon called him back.

‘By the way,’ he said carelessly. ‘If you do happen to come off these next three weeks and they should ask you to play at Canterbury in August—mind, I don’t say they will, because the competition’s red-hot and a host of people have claims—I’ll ask the secretary to give you another week.’

Petrie opened his mouth to speak. Old Gordon cut him short.

‘That’s all right,’ he interrupted. ‘Dash along and get those letters done. And when you go on tour bowl like blazes and rip the Northerners out!’

Petrie went back to his own room, sat down, uncovered his typewriter, and made ready for work. But work did not come easily now. Old Gordon had made it hard—desperately hard.

Canterbury—the Kentish Mecca. Oh! if it ever came—would it ever come—to that! Five minutes passed; ten; fifteen. Petrie, realising his folly, dashed into strenuous work.

When the letters were finished he took them into his chief's room. Gordon was out—with the secretary—might not be back for an hour. Petrie left his papers; returned to his desk. He was not sent for again. At five o'clock he took hat and stick and walked station-wards once more.

Talking to Gordon had cleared the atmosphere; all was settled now, save the baser, more material things. There were ways and means to be considered—new clothes, new flannels, small but, for him, costly importances to be acquired. And they were poor, Petrie and his mother, quite poor: he with his bare salary and she with a trivial hundred pounds a year. Petrie *père* had been a Government servant who had died young. For his son's schooling Petrie *mère* had paid. She had painted fans, had written stories—poor stories, even as poor stories go. 'Home Drivel' and the like had given her hospitality, had paid her indifferently, as, indeed, her trivial, formless output had deserved. But she had given duty and service and had compassed that to which she had set her most steadfast hand. Malcolm had had his education, had got a billet which, though small, was sure. She had exhausted her slender store of ideas; but that did not matter now. They were out of the wood; they had enough, with care, for their needs.

Petrie took out a pocket-book, jotted down the things which clamoured to be bought. The result was satisfactory. Yes, he could manage well enough. There had been foreign loans that winter, and they had brought good overtime in their train. He had twenty pounds in the savings bank—and the county paid expenses of hotel and rail. Light-hearted and reassured, he jumped from the foot-rail at Blackheath Station and ran up the sloping corridor into the cab-studded road.

'By Jove, my bag's at the club,' he thought. 'I can get it and take it along on the 'bus.' And he hurried down Bennett Park to the big, red-brick, Tudor-fashioned building at the *cul-de-sac's* end.

He pushed open the swing-doors, going into the red-tiled hall. There was a big chesterfield in front of the empty fire-place, and on and about it was a group of men. They gave him cheery greeting forthwith.

'Hullo, Petrie,' said one of them. 'Have a drink?'

Petrie shook his head. 'If you don't mind, I don't think I will,' he said.

'What's the good of asking him?' said another man. 'He's in training, Morrison. Doesn't drink between meals, and only drinks water then. That's the worst of these keen sportsmen. They take themselves so dashed seriously, don't you know!'

There was a laugh; then a question from a man lounging on the chesterfield's arm.

'How's the cricket going, Petrie? Any news?'

Petrie hesitated, playing with his reply. He had meant to tell his mother before anyone save old Gordon, whom, for other reasons, he had had to tell at once. Yet he could keep silent no longer; the news was too big, too splendid—he had, he simply *had* to let it out.

'Oh, well, there is something to tell you,' he began. 'As a matter of fact, I . . .'

But, as he spoke, the reading-room door opened and a man came into the hall, frock-coated, long-whiskered, genial-faced. He was the doctor with the biggest practice in the suburb—a man to whom Petrie owed his nomination for the Bank—a friend of his father who had helped Petrie's mother with good counsel and kind encouragement and who, like so many of his cloth (that mischief-making, miscalled 'moderns' scoff at) had refused to accept payment for many, many professional visits in the Petries' hour of need.

'Ah, it is you, Malcolm,' he said, as the bank-clerk broke off and turned round. 'I thought I heard your voice in the hall. I want to have a chat with you. Can you spare a minute or two now?'

Petrie stared.

'Of course, doctor. What is it? Will it do here?'

Doctor Custance shook his head; and there was a curious note of gruffness in his voice.

'Well, not altogether. Better come along to the committee-room, I think.'

He turned and went up the staircase at the back of the wide hall. Petrie followed—with the same sinking feeling that he had known in boyhood on the morning of his preparatory school's sports. 'It's the mater,' he thought. 'Something's the matter with her. My God, is she dead?'

Down in the hall they had begun to talk of him already.

'Sound chap, Petrie,' said one of them. 'Awful sound chap.'

'Dashed good cricketer,' said another. 'By rights he ought to have played for the county years ago.'

'So he would have done if he'd been a Blue. Or even if he'd gone to a decent school. But that blessed "Gram's" against him. It's never turned out a first-class cricketer yet. Reputation and a good kick-off count for more than anything in the sporting world.'

'And in most other places, too. All the same, it's rough luck on the chap. We all know that he can bowl!'

'What's Kent done to-day. Anyone know?'

'Two-fifty odd for three—Hutchings and Woolley both undefeated. Pretty hot start—but then Somerset are a rotten side this year.'

The talk drifted to the doings of the sporting county for which even the scoffer at athletic things has, in his heart, a tender place.

Meantime, up in the committee-room, standing, too agitated to sit, the bank-clerk was voicing his dread.

'The mater; the mater. Has anything happened to her. Tell me quickly. I must know.'

Doctor Custance, standing beside him, patted him gently on the back.

'It's all right, my boy—quite all right. Nothing's happened to your mother—nothing serious, at least. But she's got rheumatism rather badly, in rather a bad sort of way. Incipient rheumatoid arthritis—you won't know what that is, though. A sort of swelling of the joints that needs treatment if it isn't to get worse.'

'If she isn't to become a cripple,' Petrie, dry-tongued, managed to blurt.

'Well, that's about the size of it. But treatment—proper treatment—ought to stave it off. Only the thing must be taken in time, you see.'

'I see,' said Petrie slowly. He was beginning to see other things too.

'And this treatment . . . how does one get it—where does one go?'

'Droitwich: the dullest possible little spa in the universe. But the waters are wonderful. For arthritis nothing comes near them. And it's near London and not too expensive—though, of course, none of these places are cheap.'

'I see,' said Petrie again. And then: 'For how long ought she to go?'

'For three weeks at the least. And she mustn't go alone.'

'Why not?'

'Because she isn't fit to; because of the depression that the baths induce. She must be kept cheered; that's absolutely essential to the cure. She insists she can't afford to go at all. I insist that she must. She's adamant. So am I. What are we going to do?'

If Petrie had belonged to the self-analysing classes, he would have seen the drama of it, his agony would have been self-nourished, long-drawn-out, sustained. As he was a sane, healthy-minded person in the pinkest of condition, his agony took a different, infinitely shorter, form. He could hug happiness, but was, happily, incapable of grubbing among the roots of despair. He experienced, then, just such a sensation as a man may know who, far from all anæsthetics, has his finger severed by some heavy, razor-sharp, sportsman's knife. There was a minute of agony, blinding, terrific, fierce. Then he was himself again. Normal to the fibres of him, he had neither winced nor cried aloud. He only knew that he must play the game, that he must range himself on the side which had, upon him, the greater, the prior claim. His decision was taken; and by that decision he would abide.

'Do?' he asked simply. 'Why, I must take her along, that's all. As luck has it, I'm not broke just now. I've got quite a few pennies lying by.'

The doctor nodded, obviously pleased.

'Yes,' he said. 'That's the best possible thing. In fact, it was my idea all the time. But I didn't like to suggest it to you because of the cricket season, and all that. It's awful rough luck on you, Malcolm, but honestly I think you ought to go.'

'Yes, I suppose one owes one's mother something,' said Petrie quietly. 'And I don't know that I'm as keen on cricket as I was.'

There was a pause. The doctor stood looking at the bank-clerk, sidelong, under his brows. There had been something in the last sentence which had failed to ring quite true. And again, with an affectionate impulse, he patted his *protégé* on the back.

'How soon can you go, Malcolm?' he asked. 'The sooner

the better, of course. I'm rather uneasy, you see. Your mother played the deuce with her constitution when she worked so hard to keep things going and had to economise in coal. She's in quite a low state now. And one doesn't want the arthritis to get too strong a hold.'

Petrie half-smiled.

'Will Saturday week do? I can get away then.'

'Splendid! But are you sure you can get leave so soon?'

'Quite sure. There'll be no difficulty at all. In fact, you may take it that it's as good as arranged.'

Doctor Custance dropped into a chair.

'Excellent,' he said. 'Excellent indeed. I'm immensely relieved. The baths are sure to do your mother any amount of good—though I'm afraid if she's to get permanent relief she'll have to go every year now.'

'Every year!' Again the sharp, knife-like minute of agony; but, this time, not blinding, only terrific and fierce. 'Every year!' The faint, the far-off hope that (almost without his being conscious of it) the healthy brain and body of him had, in spite of everything, kept quick, was blown out, was inexorably extinguished by the bleak and gusty truth. 'Every year!' Then the dream of his life—the thing that he had wanted more than anything else in the world, could never, so long as he lived, come true.

'I see. Every year. Well, it can be managed, no doubt. One always has one's leave, you know.'

Again the doctor nodded, looking curiously at the man whose dreams he had compelled to stay dreams for a whole life through. And he divined that beneath the ready acquiescence something deeper, something, indeed, of tragedy, eluded him and lay hid. He hesitated; then, wise from much experience, held his peace. The boy would miss his cricket? Well, he supposed he would. But there was such a thing as taking games too seriously, and sympathy, he thought, would be foolish; in fact, misplaced. So he swung off into another and easier path.

'Very well, then, Malcolm. Saturday week. You'll take your mother down in the afternoon. Paddington's the station; the journey's about two hours. In the meantime I'll write to a doctor I know there and ask him to recommend some rooms. They stick you so terribly at the hotels.'

'Thanks very much,' said Petrie. 'That's all, doctor, then?'

'Yes. I think so.' Doctor Custance turned to the door, went out on to the landing, looked casually at a recently presented print, and walked slowly down the stairs. Petrie followed. The red-tiled hall was empty of men.

'A small drink, Malcolm?' said Doctor Custance. 'It won't do you any harm!'

'No—a large one, please,' answered Petrie. 'And a cigarette, if you've got one to spare.'

The other stared, then extended his cigarette-case, after that rang the bell. Presently Petrie, a large whisky-and-soda in hand, was sitting back on the big chesterfield, inhaling hard. The doctor watched him still more curiously. Something—something he couldn't fathom—lay at the back of this.

Presently Petrie leaned forward and spoke.

'Tell me some more about this Droitwich of yours, doctor,' he said. 'What sort of place is it when one gets there? And where, precisely, is it, at that?'

Doctor Custance explained—at some length—watching Petrie hard all the while.

'I see,' said the bank-clerk. 'Well, I must be dashing along now. The mater'll want to know where I am. Good-bye, doctor, and thanks, no end. I'm awfully glad you're making the mater go. She's tremendous faith in you, though she pretends that there's nothing the matter with her at all.'

He jumped up, took his hat and stick, walked across the hall, then hesitated, remembering the cricket-bag which had brought him into the club. Then, going forward again, he opened the swing doors, ran lightly down the steps. The doctor, tumbler in hand, stood staring at the doors as they swung.

'There's a girl—I'm sure of it—but after all the boy's going to Droitwich with his mother—and, well, we all of us come to it in time!'

But Malcolm—who cared nothing for women, but yet was sacrificing to one woman all his heart's desire—was hurrying home, running almost, across the heath. The air was breezeless; it was as hot as it had, that morning, been cool. The perspiration poured off him, but he did not know it. He looked neither to right nor left. He dared not, he simply dared not lift his head. For, nearly facing him, lay the battle-ground of old time, whereon he had learned his cricket in St. Germain's chapel's shade. He wanted to get home; only that. He was going to

make amends for his blindness, he was going to play the game. He did not want to poke about, but to score rapidly, to get as quickly as possible to work.

At last he left the grass and entered the long straight road that leads upwards to the wood-crested Shooter's Hill where once highwaymen harried and whence Byron made Don Juan see, for the first time, the church of Paul the Apostle, with its 'huge dun cupola,' topping the Empire city 'like a foolscap crown.' Ten minutes later he was before the little mid-Victorian villa where he had lived with his mother these last twenty-odd years.

He opened the door with his latchkey and ran through the hall. In the tiny drawing-room, on a certain hard-upholstered mahogany-framed sofa, his mother was lying, wrapped in shawl and rug. She strove to get up. Malcolm pushed her gently back.

'Mummie, if you dare!' he said, kissing her. 'Lie quiet and be good. Or I shan't take you to Droitwich with me next week.'

The little woman, peaked and drawn of aspect, but of heart most warm and mothering still, put out a protesting hand. Petrie caught it in his own, marking, with a pang, the swollen joints that he had so often seen, but whose true significance he had failed so foolishly, so selfishly, as he now felt it, to understand.

'You're not to take me, Malcolm. I won't have it. We can't afford it. You've to stay here and play cricket. Doctor Custance is making me out worse than I am.'

'Mummie, I shall smack you if you talk like that. I shall go and fetch the blue slipper that you kept specially for me when I was bad. Of course I'm going to take you to Droitwich. I want to see it—lots. And as for affording it, why I've all that foreign loan overtime money lying in the bank.'

His mother made one more protest—it was all that, in her physical weakness, she could manage to compass now.

'But your cricket, Males—your cricket. You're doing so well, too. This has been your very best year!'

Petrie bent over her, kissed her, whispered his splendid untruth:

'Mummie, shall I tell you a secret? Cricket bores me. I'm sick of it—I'm dead stale. I've played cricket of some sort or another every holidays that I've had. I want a change—we

both want one. I can take a bicycle and go about Worcestershire and look at old houses—and things like that.'

Then, as he saw his mother would oppose him no more, he jumped quickly to his feet.

'Just a second, Mummie. I must go and wash and get on some other clothes. Then I'll come down and read to you—if you'll be good and stay quite still and not move from where you are.'

Half a minute later he opened his bedroom door. He changed hurriedly, turned to go out. Then, suddenly, he went back to a little bookcase bureau beside his bed, lowered the flap of it, took pen and paper, and wrote. When he had finished he read over the written words. He fastened down the envelope, wrote the address. And in the act of it he remembered the chief who had contrived the leave for which he had asked.

'Poor old Gordon,' he thought. 'Poor old chap. He'll be sick, I know—awful sick. I believe at heart he was even keener than me.'

He turned doorwards again, then stopped, his eye stayed by a bat-rack, full of bats. He walked, of instinct, across to it, took out one of them, swung it, making mimic strokes. Suddenly he realised the circumstances—knew, in a flash, the folly of what he did. With a little laugh, he replaced the bat, stood for a moment looking at it from the middle of the bare kamptuliconed floor.

'Heigho!' he said presently. 'Heigho!'

The exclamation meant many things. It meant, to Petrie, as much as it meant to the great statesman when he said, 'Roll up the map. It will not be wanted these ten years!' Only in Petrie's case the map was rolled up for as long as Petrie lived.

One morning, about a fortnight later, he was sitting in the gardens before the Brine Baths with a paper in his hand, listening—half-listening only—to the anæmic, under-instrumented band that scraped its out-of-date musical-play refrains to the waiting throng. His mother was having hot immersion within. In the gardens were people in various stages of rheumatism—all old or middle-aged, never a sign of youth about him or around. Petrie, bored to the point of extinction, depressed to distraction's nadir, pulled himself together with an effort and forced himself to read.

Presently he felt a hand on his shoulder, heard a cheery voice.

'Mornin'. Good day, isn't it? Just seen your mother again.'

Petrie looked up. It was the physician to whom Doctor Custance had written and under whose care Mrs. Petrie had been placed.

'Ah, good morning—yes, quite a good day. How's my mother doing? Can you tell yet?'

'Oh, uncommon well, I think. But she mustn't overdo it, don't you know. Make her lie down immediately she gets back to her lodgings and, above all, don't let her get depressed.'

Petrie smiled ruefully.

'I can promise the one,' he said. 'As for the other, I can only do my best.'

The physician looked at him with keen, quizzical eyes.

'Then you don't find us gay here?' he asked, smiling in turn.

Petrie hesitated; then, as the other laughed aloud, he laughed frankly back.

'Well, not exactly riotous,' he explained. 'There isn't, is there, so awfully much to do!'

The other looked inexpressibly grave.

'My dear man,' he said: 'I've hammered at 'em till I'm black in the face. There's no casino, no winter garden, no decent music, no anything at all. Except, of course, the Brine. That's incomparable, if you like.'

He paused, looking at Petrie, sizing him carefully up.

'You're a cricketer,' he ventured. 'Isn't that the "Incog" tie?'

'Yes,' said Petrie, 'it is.'

'I thought as much. Well, look here, if you'd like some cricket let me know. There's no ground in Droitwich fit to play on, but at Worcester there's any amount. If you like I'll write to somebody and get you a game or two.'

Petrie wavered, then stiffened, very suddenly, up.

'Oh, thanks very much,' he said. 'But I'm not very keen. I'm quite content to slack about. It's a change. I get lots of cricket at home.'

He spoke coldly, the need to cloak his feelings making him almost rude. The physician noticed the change of tone—and resented it. After all, he had only meant to be polite.

'Just as you like,' he said carelessly, 'just as you like.'

Then he threw out a commonplace before he turned away.

'Good score against Kent yesterday, I see. Their bowlers got collared at last. The old hands are a bit stale, I expect. Even the champion county wants some new blood now and then.'

'Er—yes,' agreed Petrie, icily. 'I—er—suppose it does.'

There was an awkward silence. The physician, a very quick-tempered, much overworked man, nodded, outwardly courteous, but furious at heart.

'Good-day,' he called, as he turned finally away.

'Good-day,' said Petrie dully. 'Good-day.'

The doctor left the Brine Baths Gardens and passed into the grounds of a neighbouring hotel. He had meant to make himself agreeable to a man whose clean healthiness had quite attracted him; he had been snubbed, knew it, and did not like it at all.

'Young prig that,' he thought. 'Beastly young prig. And a slacker, too. If he can play cricket, why doesn't he go and do it instead of messing about down here?'

But, though he knew all about rheumatism, he knew very little about life—perhaps because he had had a brilliant academical career and could set many letters after his name.

And his diagnosis, in this instance, was out of it—out of it altogether, and hopelessly wrong. Petrie, who had refused his overtures, whom, in consequence, he had thought a prig, had called a slacker, was, at that very moment, playing cricket—first-class cricket—playing it, as a matter of fact, quite hard.

AUSTIN PHILIPS.

ON SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE'S DOORSTEP.

'Two famous seventeenth-century houses—65 and 66 Russell Square, W.C.—have just been pulled down in connection with the extension of the Imperial Hotel.

'Sir Thomas Lawrence, the painter, and President of the Royal Academy, resided at No. 65 from 1769 to 1830. On one occasion when General Platoff was having his portrait painted at the house, two Cossacks mounted on white horses and armed with long spears, stood as sentinels at the door.'

Coming one day a few weeks back on these paragraphs in a newspaper column, my thoughts went at once to the picture of two pretty young women, clinging—in terror of being crushed by an excited mob—to the iron railings at the doorstep of No. 65 Russell Square. It was in the Summer of 1814, when all London was in a state of great excitement at the visit of the Allied Sovereigns after the Peace of Paris had been signed. Marshal Blücher was inside the house, having his portrait painted by Sir Thomas (or, as he then was, *Mr.*) Lawrence, and a great crowd had gathered to see him come out, collecting so imperceptibly that the poor frightened ladies had been surrounded and closed in before they knew where they were.

Then again I pictured one of these same young matrons, standing with her husband one Sunday morning, that same notable summer of 1814, on the same doorstep, only this time they had it all to themselves, and could enjoy the sight of the Cossack, clattering up the Square on horseback with his 'prodigious' lance held before him, suddenly investing the Sunday quiet of Russell Square with a sort of wild romantic atmosphere—to be followed by a coach containing the Hetmann Platoff—the idol of the London crowd. Fancy the delight of seeing Platoff issue forth in full Cossack get-up, no one there to bar the view or share the good hard Cossack stare, which was bestowed in full on the pretty lady! We are glad to think that she on her part did not waste her opportunity and that she stared well at Platoff!

These pictures are not imaginary ones. The scenes had been described in some old family letters, and before No. 65 Russell Square has been pulled down it may be interesting to hear the stories circling round its doorstep, as related in these letters.

The writer was a young married lady living in London. Her husband—Mr. John Herman Merivale—was a man well-known in the literary and legal sets of his time. Her father was Dr. Drury, the old Headmaster of Harrow, Lord Byron's friend as well as master. Mrs. Merivale, young, lively, and clever, took a keen interest in all the events of the day, writing long letters to her relations and friends in the country in the beautifully clear and regular handwriting which ladies then had seemingly the leisure to cultivate.

Her home lay near Russell Square, and she was constantly passing Sir Thomas Lawrence's door. In that exciting and unusual summer of 1814 she was rather inclined to pity anyone who was not in London.

'I feel,' she says, 'without wishing to make the Country mice envious, that just now the Town mouse's lot is the most preferable by 100!'

She is writing to her sister-in-law, Miss Nancy Merivale, in Devonshire.

London, June, 1814. |

MY DEAR NANCY,

I sit down with the intent of giving you some idea of what London is at this present time, but it would require a much abler pen than mine to pourtray the truly Holiday, gala, almost mad appearance of the whole Town, and nothing is heard of, or talked about, than Emperors, Kings, Marshalls, Grand Dukes and Cossacks.

In the Streets you are continually meeting Foreigners of every Rank, in short, everyone says 'Well, I wish they were all gone, for while they remain, there is certainly nothing to be done.'

The Illuminations were reckoned particularly brilliant, but having a horror of crowds and rockets, I chose to sit in and suppose all their Brilliancy. . . . I think Illuminations are always to be imagined but *persons* are not, and it has been my anxious wish to see as many of the Heroes as possible, tho' as yet I have only hit upon Marshal Blücher who seems to be the prime Darling of the people, and whom I shall reckon most

fortunate if he returns to his home in a sound skin, for he is literally besieged wherever he appears;—but I will journalize.—

Mrs. Merivale goes on to give a lively account of the scenes in the streets: Military Officers of all nations *behung* with Orders, Ribbons, Crosses, etc. Preparations making for the Nights' Illuminations. Jews crying about Medals, 'Please Ladies and Gentlemen, buy an Emperor Alexander, only 2*d*. a piece—here's six Kings of Prussia for 1*s*.'

In the course of a morning's sight-seeing the writer and her husband on their way to St. James's Palace, where they hope to get a sight of Blücher, pass the Petersburg Hotel and have a look at some strange foreign carriages just arrived there:—

Imagine a long Baker's Cart of Basket work, or a Mail Cart, both of which you may often have seen in *this* Country. A Pole like the Mast of a Man-o'-War, wheels like a heavy Cart, a little wooden Seat by way of Coach box, an old Gig-head as a Top, the whole encrusted with the mud of years—and you may have an idea of the 2 Equipages we now beheld,—so low you hardly required the Aid of a Step to get in, and so uncommonly grotesque it was impossible to avoid Laughter with no small degree of exultation at our superiority in the Art of Coach-building. We then bent our way to the next Court in which Blücher's House is.

Here was a tolerable Mob of the common order, all standing with fixed Eyes at 2 Drawing Room Windows where we were assured the Hero had already appeared. . . .

At last the window was thrown up and the old General grandly habited, appeared at it bowing and Smiling to the Populace, who on their sides shouted most enthusiastic applause with Hats in the Air. He is a remarkably handsome old man. . . .

At the King's Mews they have another sight of the 'Curious Carriages,' belonging to the newcomers.

'One or two had some resemblance to old fashioned Coaches, some to old pictures I have seen in Gil Blas, but the generality were a kind of Barouche open Carriage in which the favourite basket work was conspicuous. They were of all Countries. French, German, Prussian, and engrafted with mud which I understand is never cleaned off 'because it is useless Trouble to clean what must so soon get dirty.'

Poor Mrs. Merivale with her 'horror of crowds' goes on to relate a very unpleasant experience she and her sister-in-law (Mrs. Harry Drury) had had, in which 'Sir Thomas Lawrence's doorstep' plays a very important part. She writes :

And now I must relate a hair-breadth escape we had *for our Lives*, which we two got into, *we* of all persons who most hate a cram or a Squeeze !

After Church Caroline and I agreed to pay a call or two and on our way to Coram Street, passing through Russell Square we saw a few Ladies, 8 or 9 I believe, standing each side the Step of a House.

Observing no crowd or apparent cause for their Position but that everyone bent their steps that way, I went up to one and asked her the Reason. She replied :

'The Steps belong to Mr. Lawrence's House whither Marshal Blücher was at that moment sitting for his Picture. She having seen him go in and taken her Station accordingly.

'Well, Caroline' said I, 'what can we wish for better? We shall be close to him without any danger whatever, for you observe a passage must be kept down the middle of the Pavement to the Street, and we are foremost.'

Who would have resisted so tempting a situation? I was placed with one foot on the last Step, by which my Back came against, as I judged, the Safeguard of the iron railing. C.,—leaning on my arm, stood below me, on the pavement, opposite us was a similar Row formed, leaving ample passage between.

This was capital, and as the Crowd, tho' fast assembling, respected the Passage there seemed no reason to retreat.

When that reason came, alas ! it was impossible, the Pavement filled rapidly, we, terrified, tried to get away, but there was no egress. The Square in a few minutes was *completely* filled *from one end to the other* with carriages and mobs of all kinds.

His carriage drew up but could not come at all near the Point, the Passage we had relied on being no longer respected but filled up with the lowest Riff-Raff.

A Polish Lancer pranced up (whom we mistook for a Cossack by his Beard) with Blücher's Horse, which could approach no nearer than the Carriage.

The Coach itself was covered with men, the Lamp-posts were crowded. Ladies were standing on narrow ledges in the adjoining Areas, but the Horror of our Situation became too great to admit of much leisure for Admiration.

We begged to be allowed to get away, but the thing was not possible; a little girl near us was very nearly pushed underfoot; and was only saved by the exertions of a Gentleman, who, seeing our nervous, unprotected State, squared his arms to keep off the pressure, and told us there was no danger if we but kept our ground.

The Servant had opened the Hall Door several Times, and the Parlour Bell had sounded thrice, at each of which symptoms of his approach the Mob had tried to *rush up the Steps* giving us a horrid foretaste of what would be done when he actually appeared.

A foreign Servant at last came forward and told the Coachman he must drive *up to the Steps*.

Whether he meant this literally or only that he should come opposite I know not, but the Mob took it up in dudgeon and told him he knew nothing of England if he thought such a thing possible, to which he replied in broken English, very truly, that 'they knew nothing of Manners.'

This proving an ineffectual summons, Sir Charles Stewart came out, and beckoned to the Polish Lancer to bring the Horse. He tried also to make room on the Steps and said, 'My good Friends, come now, walk away arm in arm, make room for the gallant Marshal! won't you make room for him?'

The door again opened and out came the poor man, looking I thought, both terrified and vexed, but I had little time for Speculation and enough to do to keep my Ground and assist C. to do the same.

A crowd all passing one way is bad enough, but here were 2 enormous masses meeting and trying to press up the Space of a few Steps.

I was pinned up against the Rails by a weighty arm from which I expected my full quietus. 'You'll kill me! for God's sake, move away!'

'No, I won't my dear,' with a horrid Mob-like sang-froid! Truly terrific was that Answer!

All pressed to shake hands with Blücher or only to touch or jostle him. Even our kind guardian needs do the same. The loudest Acclamations 'God bless you, you gallant fellow! You're a brave one! There's a fine Fellow' were the loud outcries which with the huzzaing and yelling applause nearly stunned me!

I saw him as well as I could anyone just at arm's length, his Head uncovered and a plain black cloak, but instead of trying to touch him I devoutly wished him off the Steps that we might be

released from our perilous Situation. It was one or two painful minutes before he could move at all. When he *did* contrive to descend we edged up behind him and reached the top step in safety from whence we saw him ride off on his Horse, but how he got through the Crowd I have no idea, for we two instantly ran into the House and sat down in the Hall which we had all to ourselves. C. was terribly frightened, but she bore it better than I did, for, as I always do in a fright I had an hysterical bout of crying before I was recovered to get home. We were about $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour in this perilous Situation.

Your loving L. H. MERIVALE.

I hear he at last took shelter in Kensington Gardens where he was pursued and had to stand with his back to a Tree, while the Mob tried to shake hands with him.

After this appalling taste of a crowd Mrs. Merivale was content to keep quiet and let the Royalties go by, but, before they went, Sir Thomas Lawrence's doorstep was once more the scene of an excitement which was immediately written about on her return home. The writer must again tell her own tale of the quiet Sunday-morning walk and its delightfully unexpected sequel.

London.

Sunday, July 3rd, 1814.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

You have heard of my meeting with the Marshal *Prince Blücher* from which I derived no gratification as the horrible squeeze made me fear for my life or limbs. Bearing this in mind I made no attempt to see any more of the Foreign Lions, but suffered Emperor, King and Princes to depart unseen by me; yet still we had a piece of good fortune '*as lucky as meeting Masterman.*' Last Sunday it was our hap to pass thro' Russell Square after Church in our way to the West End of the town; seeing the emptiness of the place I made the remark of the difference of its appearance during the time *Blücher* was sitting for his picture. We were nearly at the end of Southampton Row, four doors from which lives Mr. Lawrence; suddenly a Cossack in full costume, bearing his prodigious lance, 'Oh, let us run' exclaimed I, and a few hasty steps brought us to the door, by the time the Carriage had stopped. I pulled John up the steps of the House, of which station we were *the sole Possessors*. Out of the Coach came the Hettmann Platoff whom we immediately knew by his Cossack dress, a full Cloth Trowser fastened in at the Ankle, his neck hung out with Orders and

Crosses, his Head bare. As he walked up the Steps, followed by two english gentlemen, I curtsied, John took off his hat, and he returned our salutation with a bow. I ought to have offered my *cheek*, or at least my *hand* according to the present fashion, but an *antique, out-of-date* modesty withheld me and confined me to the limits of a *broad stare*, in which I indulged *sans cérémonie*, and for which I had a glorious opportunity as the General after he had entered the house, (doubtless liking to be looked at) came out upon the Steps and stood for 3 or 4 minutes giving orders to the attendant Cossack in his own language. Of course perceiving my fixed eyes, he honoured me with a steadfast gaze, and John expected he would have offered his Hand, but I suppose in courtesy he could not have been so bold. In the Gazette de France which Mr. H. takes in I was amused with an account of the english manners, in which they say, saluting our illustrious visitors has been quite the *rage* and that those Ladies who cannot boast that they have shaken hands with the '*Hettmann Russe n'ose se montrer nulle part.*' Oh dear ! think of my *pig market* education ! Platoff is an old weather beaten Soldier, short and small with nothing of nobility in his person and appearance.

The Attendant was a remarkably tall, handsome fellow ; after receiving his orders he walked his Horse some way up the Square, during which time we kept by his side, and then he set off in a gallop as magnificent and fine as 'the Lake of Killarney!' We proceeded on our way, and returning thro' Russell Square at five o'clock, saw a tolerable Crowd collected round Lawrence's house, awaiting Platoff's coming out. We *pitied* and walked quietly on, having *done seeing*.

Yours most affectionately, L. H. M.

To Mrs. Drury.

Cockwood nr. Dawlish, S. Devon.

How fresh it all reads!—and it was nearly a hundred years ago!

And so good-bye to Sir Thomas Lawrence's Doorstep with the shadowy forms going in and out, which these old letters have, it is hoped, helped to conjure up. Alas! that in 1912 Hotels must take the place of our Ghosts !

EMILY H. BUCKINGHAM.

THE CHURCH IN MARY FERRAR'S HOUSE.

A green thought in a green shade.

WORN, silent, remote, alone, in 'a solitary wooded place' amid meadows golden with buttercups, the tiny church stands.

The afternoon stillness of June—a stillness full of voices—surrounds it, as some vocal silence of deep love the soul. A green copse grows right up to the paling of the small God's Acre, fringed within by flowering sycamore and ancient yew: a little pond gleaming like a bright eye through the trees' lower boughs. A meadow yet greener, 'The King's Close,' drops to the wide, unfeatured, rural flatness of the midland landscape. The fields around, richly timbered, close in the sunny quiet place with a deep peace, from sight and hearing of even an empty country lane.

The paling goes all round—a serviceable criss-cross of strong wood, to keep out sheep and cows. For the gate beside the bare red modern farmhouse leads into wide pasture-land that spreads all around, as in the old days behind us and it. The green track to the churchyard wicket, the paved pathway within it, alike divide the reaches of the buttercups that carpet all the still place with their gold. As the little gate drops behind him with a subdued clank of its latch, the pilgrim's foot—only pilgrims come here—falls on old broad flagstones, and almost instantly one of them is a grave. He deciphers a name—'Mapletoft.' Then, in the midst of the way, a square altar-tomb blocks the road to the west door. He pauses as before a shrine, but there is no inscription to read on its worn grey stones; nor, it seems, has there ever been one. Beyond, another pavement-stone almost touches it, in brotherly fashion, as the silent dead desired; but from this its little square brass plate has been removed within the church, leaving the marks of rivets. He must pass on yet a few steps, to reach 'the half-pace of stairs at the door where we go into the church.' For this little shrine, in its green and golden silence, has outlived its many memories, even to the last six feet of its own western end, which the raging Puritan tore down to get at 'the idolatrous organ.' Pious hands closed the

wound with a peaked and pinnacled front, not without dignity, and holding a bell. The door is of black fine-grained wood, carved with a beautiful twisted column for half its height and an open-worked row of the like above. On its left leaf a small worn brass plate says, in defaced pathetic letters, 'The House of Prayer.' The hands that set it on the older door lie under the unnamed altar-tomb.

The pilgrim has thrust the key into its hole. Linger on the step, he glances back over his road. Here each peaceful moment has its meaning and is precious; not to be wasted by pressing on to the next. Before he steps within there he would fain call up a picture. His, surely, is that 'seeing eye' which, some tell us, should have power upon things physical, to draw from them impressions, mute yet abiding, left by past but vivid human living, as the fire's heat brings back its colour to 'invisible ink.' If so, here among the buttercups shall he not meet with friends? In these 'green wood-ways' of theirs are there no 'eyes among the leaves'?

On the field he crossed, distant 'about 40 paces,' lies a broad strip of daisies, silver upon gold. 'Where them white flowers is,' the passing shepherd said, 'th' old house did use to be. 'Tis stony-like, if you was to dig there, the ground, even now.'

Lying in the low autumn sunshine of 1637, 'a fair house, fairly seated,' met the wide-eyed gaze of young Mr. Inglesant, the Queen's page, as he rode 'through a fine grove and sweet walks, letticed and gardened on both sides,' towards the calm and fragrant presence of Mary Collet. The daisies and the meadow keep to-day the place filled then with the peaceful hum of a large and busy household. Here, morning and night, three generations knelt for the blessing of 'Mary Ferrar, widow, mother of this family,' of the ancient Cheshire house of the Woodnoths, 'a tall, straight, clear-complexioned old gentlewoman, of a comely presence and a countenance full of gravity.' Here for many a year they dwelt together, 'more than forty persons,' in family harmony and in the devout practice of a ruled and ordered piety. Happy, busy people, they wake full of character before the inward eye, here in this 'bliss of solitude,' where they sought for the Secret of Life. It draws to 'the hour of evensong in the church.' The peaceful bell is calling. See, pilgrim, the long family procession comes, between the high hedges of their 'close path,' from manor-house to church. The

altar-tomb is no more there : first walks Nicholas the deacon in surplice and hood, leading his mother. Good elder brother John follows—' a short, black-complexioned man, his apparel and hair so fashioned as to make him show priest-like ' ; ' the young youths in black gowns and round Monmouth caps ' ; handsome, motherly Susanna Collet ; the ' seven virgin sisters ' ; ' the womenfolk all in gowns of one grave fashion, with comely veils,' save one, who wears for some gentle pious reason ' a gray monk's frock.' Stolid menservants and ' mannerly maids ' bring up the rear. Open, pilgrim, and enter with them, the devout quaintness of it all warm about thy heart.

The small silent place is narrow and long and still, lined with old, pale, carven oak, ' all wainscotted and pillared and arched.' Deep stalls and desks on either side the nave give place in the quire, raised by one step, to shallow sedilia in the same wood. The tall square-headed nave windows are blazoned to-day with the arms of the Ferrars and their kin, of Charles their king and guest, of others whose loyal hands restored these damaged walls. Only the ' fair island seat,' towards the north (probably under the departed tower) is missing—where the women sat together, granddame, mother, and maidens. But still the pilgrim, resting his book on the open wings of a ' large eagle of brass,' may read from Nicholas's own lectern what majestic words he will, concerning those who in the sight of the unwise have seemed to die. (For the eagle was fished out of the little pond's kind protection about the year 1850, though his silver claws went the way of other silver, in some Commonwealth trooper's pocket.) The tiny font stands near the door—a fine piece, elaborate in workmanship, ' leg, laver, and cover all of brass, cut and carved, the laver of the bigness of a barber's bason.' And beyond the high arch between nave and quire, raised by yet another step (Inglesant's ' half-pace '), a silent sanctuary holds yet the small ancient ' table of cedar-wood,' altar of many a first Sunday of the month, ' the constant usual day for their Communion.'

The tender silence deepens in this home of souls, with its warm scent of old wood and sunshine. Through the tall open door come voices of a bird-haunted graveyard, airs from green pastures and far-away still English waters. The walls of the world roll back. His own life seems to pause, and the pilgrim is aware of the dead more than of himself, the living. *Requiem eternam—lux perpetua!* The human ancient cry rises uncalled.

He lacks some finer sympathies if in such orisons he casts no pious thought to one Joseph Henry Shorthouse, mystic, to whose magician touch he most probably owes the knowledge and the glamour that have drawn him here. A generation said to love noise and philanthropy better than silence and contemplation would probably have recked little of the Ferrars without John Inglesant, whose boyish handsome head and visionary eyes, his satin and falling laces and love-locks, mingle so inevitably with that family procession that it takes a definite effort to keep him out—since to know him is to love him. And doubtless, unless our magician was inspired inconceivably ill, there were Inglesants of flesh and blood among the 'many men of birth and fortune' who came to visit at Little Gidding, and 'Johnny' only differs from them in being blest in his biographer. In his turn, this biographer, seeking material, doubtless fell in with certain models of his craft, whose memorial, born of an adoring love for the subject and a frank relish for homely particulars, is among the things that still 'smell sweet and blossom in the dust.'

There are those who—under that 'lamentation and mourning and woe' which, according to Matthew Arnold, fall to-day at moments on 'any humble child of nature'—regard the pious practice of religious biography as a thing more honoured in the breach than the observance. Let such an one comfort himself in John Ferrar and the Rev. Dr. Jebb. Here be no thick-set tomes, enshrining solid blocks of letters in 'small brevier'; here no laborious pages of inferior Church history, covering the subject's threescore years and ten, no microscopic views of his doctrine or his sermons. Brother John's too often edited paragraphs are dutifully numbered, whereof many are short and few long; and in all his book there are but one hundred and thirty-nine. But, then, each is pithy, set apart for one topic, and crammed with what Hannah More called 'Goody Two-Shoes details.' 'Dr. Jebb,' whose identity is lost for us, is more the writer and more diffuse than that concise and well-trained gentleman and man of business. His paragraphs are fewer, but longer—seventy-six in all; and, being not of the family, he does not scruple to place them in the kindly light of his affectionate admiration. The two graphic tales together fall well short of three hundred pages of modern print. Neither can be absolved of a didactic intent; but it wholly fails to spoil them, unconscious love

and sincerity and the pure delight of story-telling saving the reader any taste of that dreadful dainty, the exhortation sandwich.

The story owes its attraction in part no doubt to the epoch-making days in which it befell, but far more to the living figures who move through the simple drama. People of distinction and of a fine culture, known, through their own force of character, to the great world, they are, doubtless, types of their age at its best and calmest, of the life devout at its sanest, purest, and most thoughtful. But alike the reader's heart and their vivid reality are offended by such a phrase. Mary and John Ferrar; Nicholas, 'the soul that inspirited the whole family'; daughter Collet, 'a gentlewoman of an excellent understanding and much reading,' a fine player on the viol; the sister-group, happy wives and gentle girl-saints; that brilliant younger Nicholas 'whom his uncle entirely loved,' yielding up a life of splendid promise, 'most cheerful to die'; Virginia and her silkworms; 'little Mall and Nan' sewing seams, learning seven psalms, dancing down the garden alleys—these be no types, but, in telling Scots phrase, 'kent folk.'

If Little Gidding has a story it begins picturesquely, though through a score of years events are few.

In the year 1625 the widow of one Mr. Nicholas Ferrar—a rich East India merchant, once 'intimate with those brave men and gallant sailors, Sir Walter Rawley, Sir John Hawkins, and Sir Francis Drake,' and 'lately dying in a good old age'—lived in a 'great house' in the 'parish of St. Bennett Sherehogge, in St. Sythe's Lane, in London' (now Sise Lane, opening out of Wood Street, Cheapside), the two sons John and Nicholas making their home there, a married daughter living at Bourne Bridge, near Cambridge. The family, like the dead father, were 'zealous lovers of the Church.' The sons, laymen, had been employed in public business in connexion with the Virginia Company (lately wound up), out of which dangerous undertaking they came the poorer, with clean hands and a high reputation for capacity. Nicholas, Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge, after a brilliant career, had declined the attractive post of Secretary to Elizabeth, Princess Palatine, that he might travel through Europe for his health (*Wanderjahre* strongly suggestive of John Inglesant's, which are tempting, but do not belong to Little Gidding).

One summer day the Ferrars were at the funeral of a next-door neighbour; the next a second sickened. A grim spectre

rose. "'Tis the plague,' said the brothers to each other. Late on Whitsun-eve John sent for a coach and carried off his mother and the household in haste to the safe care of Sister Collet at Bourne. She 'had bought a lordship the year before in so obscure a village it scarce had any name in our most accurate maps: a very good air, but a depopulated place in Huntingdonshire; no house in the parish, but only the manor-house and a cottage for the shepherds, who, together with their dogs, were very sufficient managers of the whole estate.' John travelled on at once, 'there to make up lodgings, for the house was no better than all ruined.' But the stately old lady knew too well the cares belonging in that day to a mother of frail and busy sons. Nicholas remained in London winding up affairs and paying debts, and even to Bourne came sinister rumours of 4000 deaths a week. When she heard that he was safe with John, she cared nothing for advice about quarantine. It was but fifteen miles, and her hale seventy years feared neither horseback nor country lanes. On a June afternoon Mary Ferrar, like our pilgrim, first saw Little Gidding. Only Dr. Jebb will do here. 'Their greeting was like that of old Jacob and his son Joseph, after his father had given him over for lost. He prayed her to enter the rude house and to repose herself after her journey. "Not so," said she; "yonder I see the church; let us first go thither to give God thanks."'

'It was told her "there was no getting into it, for there had not been time to empty the hay that was in it." By the sacrilege and profaneness of the former inhabitants the House of God was turned into a hay-barn and hog-sty. But this good woman had somewhat of Augustine's mother Monica in her devotion, of whom that father affirms that "if a dragon stood between her and the altar, she would have stepped through him." Thrusting into the church a little way, she kneeled and prayed and wept there about a quarter of an hour. Then she charged her son "to send instantly for all the workmen about the house," which were many, and commanded them to fling out all the hay at the church windows, and to cleanse it as well as they could. She was obeyed, and saw all this done.' Cannot we see her disgusted face, elaborate seventeenth-century skirts held high out of the mess?

Mary Ferrar left Little Gidding again, so it seems, but once; 'at Easter they made one step to London, that the good old

gentlewoman might take her last leave of all her friends, expecting to see them no more; for she was resolved by the grace of God to take livery and seisin of her new purchase by laying her bones there.' She had already gathered her family around her, and building had gone on busily. We know little of the Collets before, at her wish, they left Bourne to make their home at Gidding. Mr. Collet, indeed, remains somewhat of a mystery, the many transactions about his children, of which records remain, being all conducted between his wife and Nicholas, till the irreverent reader begins to wonder if he were the featureless husband of a vigorous woman, or merely unusually 'submiss.' Probably the Ferrar estate, administered for their mother by Nicholas and John, was their sister's main resource; and such family groupings in one home were common, and seemed more natural, at that day.

The year drawing round again found the Ferrars still in London. 'On Whitsun-eve,' the mother knew, 'Nicholas was up all night in his closet.' On Trinity Sunday evening he came to her room, and, drawing 'from the place where he wore it next his heart' a solemn vow written on vellum, told her how, early that morning Laud (then Bishop of St. David's), in Henry VII.'s Chapel, with only his old tutor by, had ordained him deacon. Mary Ferrar's devout heart leaped back to a day twenty-seven years earlier, when 'she and the maids sat making little bands for the children, and setting fine laces to them,' and this 'lovely child, fair and of bright hair' like her own, 'came very soberly to his mother and earnestly prayed her that his bands might have no lace on them, but be made little plain bands.' 'Why, child, will you not have your bands like the rest of your brothers?' 'No, I pray you, dear mother, let mine be such little plain bands as Mr. Antony Wotton wears: for I will be a preacher as he is.' Though they laughed, 'he would have no nay!'

Some friends in high places thought a brilliant man had thrown away a career; others offered livings he did not want. The Ferrars took the quiet road 'back to their Little Gidding,' there to develop the devout household and the ordered life which Inglesant knew and shared. Mr. Shorthouse's delicate picture has, alas! its inaccuracies. But a limitless gratitude is his due who, rescuing it from the chill grip of the student of ecclesiastical curiosities, has shown us, lit by the golden vision of a scholar soul,

'own brother' to Nicholas Ferrar, this lovely and pregnant bit of history. It is ours, perhaps, to understand the Ferrars better than did their contemporaries, distance lending both the proverbial enchantment and also clearness to the view. Their daily prayers and night watches puzzled country neighbours and serious Puritans; and Gidding was called 'Mr. Ferrar's religious house,' 'the Protestant nunnery,' and other such old names as obscure a new thing.

A new thing it was: the live and untrammelled development of ancient thoughts is always new. But this new thing had elements which, however implicit in certain persistent instincts and ideas, have never save then been seen at work in daily life. It is not understood till this is recognised.

In the last half-century more than one learned and pious writer has taken in hand to make the Ferrars known to a later generation. Their careful work, with all reverence for research and devotion, is like a modern altar-frontal set beside the 'carpets of blue silk embroidered in gold' with which Mary Ferrar 'adorned the communion-table.' The reader is inevitably aware of one inward yearning in the writer: the desire to show forth the full kinship of Nicholas Ferrar and his unique experiment in the life religious, with movements developed more completely in our own age. Modern thoughts thrust themselves in. The freshness of the buttercup meadows gives place to a scent of church candles. Mary Collet's gentle dark gown and veil hide themselves behind the habit of an Anglican sisterhood. The tapestried chamber, where the recluse of Little Gidding 'walks and stands at a desk to read or write,' becomes a study somewhere in nineteenth-century Oxford, its walls lined with Ary Scheffer prints and 'Tracts for the Times.' Whatever be the attractions of such a picture, it is not according to the records. And a life-like story removed to an age when it did not happen is no longer itself. The reader, annoyed, turns an ear perhaps too deaf to hints of an eighteenth-century editor softening severities and blunting points, and seeks again the graphic simplicities of those who knew and loved in the body this family 'full of humanity and humility.' To see Nicholas Ferrar only as the ascetic recluse, the man of fast and vigil, ancestor after the spirit of many a saintly Tractarian of to-day, is not to see him whole, or even truly.

All these things he was. By nature contemplative, he yearned for the strength that comes of rule and order; for the

stimulus of ritual and ceremonial, of 'our solemn service performed with good and grave cathedral music.' Severities of the body brought him motherly scoldings. Together he and she eagerly restored the impropriated tithes and lost glebe-land of Little Gidding. Ordained by Laud, the 'exceeding dear brother' of Bemerton's 'Country Parson,' the principles which made him suspect and later drew Puritan fury towards Gidding were those for which, within living memory, the saints of the Oxford Movement suffered hate and derision. Only in the embrace of 'his mother the Church of England' could this eager and severe soul have dwelt at ease, his seed inheriting the land. He sought from her raiment, nurture, *Viaticum*; and at her least command had gladly died. True is it that memories of Pusey and Carter, of Hursley Vicarage, of the ascetic beauty of Liddon, rise like a scent from the pages of Dr. Jebb.

And yet—has the word been said? That word which speaks the man only when each living detail falls of itself into place? Thus limned, is he perfectly in tone with our green and human Gidding? And where is the Nicholas who, 'in a warm discourse,' declared that had 'the Mass' been said, unknown to him, in his house, he would have pulled down the room? the 'orthodox, regular, puritan protestant' of that 'worthy gentleman,' who dined with my lord, 'where was store of great company, and they fell upon discourse of Gidding'?—the lover of Foxe's 'Martyrs' next to his Bible? Does an elusive person elude us still?

Ferrar is neither of those two opposed persons. For he is both. The mystic is larger than any school, as he is found at home in each. This 'Levite in his own house' is one of those souls of original and originating genius whom no 'party' represents. There is in him a holy fearlessness and freedom of soul which, like his subtle charm in human intercourse, most recalls that latest of English saints, George Howard Wilkinson; whose rare personality, like his, eludes the biographer: the intimate alike of imprisoned ritualist and saintly Presbyterian; whose hearers were reminded at one moment of the first Jesuits, at the next of John Wesley; who, founder himself of a religious house of women, knew also to their last detail to-day's problems of the home, and that mute mystery, the soul of an English boy.

Trained for life by a rare apprenticeship of success as scholar, thinker, and man of affairs, one instinct—that seeking fulfilment by the road called the spiritual—conquers all others; and at

thirty-three Ferrar gives himself, without a backward look, to seclusion and to his idea. 'Blessed he who has found his work : let him ask no other blessedness !' The cry of a latter-day sage (who, by the way, abused him with sufficient ignorance) speaks Ferrar's reading of life. 'If you have cut off the right hand,' said one who knew the saints, 'you can't expect to use it afterwards.' Thus we find him strong where they are strong, weak where they are weak. Like all powerful men, he has *les défauts de ses qualités*, and becomes himself only less through his limitations than through his dreams. Frail health and his inmost instincts made Gidding's silent peace dear and more dear ; and as his passionate soul ripened, tender at once and obstinate as is only the saint, the ascetic in him grew to some excess. Dying, this ripe man of letters, with words almost violent about his 'misspent time in them,' burned upon his chosen grave all his books, 'many hundreds, in all kinds of languages, which he had in all places gotten with great search.' Such a man, tenderly loved at home, is to the vulgar mind a little portentous ; and we learn without surprise that the men in the fields, running at sight of the great smoke to put out a burning Gidding, 'set it about that Mr. Nicholas Ferrar lay a-dying, but could not die till he had burned all his conjuring-books.' At the bedside, 'Mass !' cried heartbroken brother John, 'what shall become of us poor sheep ?'

For, born to give birth to an idea, Ferrar became enamoured of a thing he had never seen. He created it ; and it never has been seen again. He succeeded in adapting to a religious rule the uses of a large and varied family both of men and women—a thing surely never attempted save by him ; creating in a few short years, and always meaning to create, not a strange kind of convent, but a new company of the life devout. Here a main element of 'community life' was absent ; for in 'Mr. Ferrar's religious house' its members were child and parent, sister and brother, who never yet chose one another or their home. Its days, alive with work and charity, were ruled by two capable mothers ; and fragrant with the wholesome joys, the innermost devotions, of a deeply united family. To make of these an offering of a sweet-smelling savour, to draw together the 'kindred points of heaven and home,' was this wise spirit's dream. That it came true is proved by its continuance after his death for at least eight long and anxious years, and probably more.

We miss its full meaning if we fail to remember that he was not alone. To his idea 'his good mother, the veritable foundress and governess of their religious life,' obedient with the sympathy of a perfect self-effacement to the child who had obeyed her, dedicated what was left of her days. Gidding, of its very nature, demanded two makers. The cloister asks the saint: the home, after a tender Indian proverb, is 'not a hearth, but a woman.'

The scene is full of a simple country charm, human, alive, delicate. In such a development of the life devout there is surely something curiously and characteristically germane to England and all her instincts. It stands alone, pathetically silent, but fragrant with tender and beautiful suggestion for all heirs of its spirit.

Nicholas called his system 'the rule by which he ordered his family.' He explained their 'canonical hours' to an inquirer as matins and evensong in church 'after the order of the book of common prayer' and four times of 'particular prayers for a private family'; compiled by his own enlightened learning, from ancient and other sources. The church in Mary Ferrar's house looked to this one clerical member as their spiritual head; but he never received or sought priest's orders, and they remained dependent on their neighbour, the vicar of Steeple Gidding, for sacrament, and (as it seems) also for sermon. Spiritual guide and family counsellor at once, Nicholas was, in speech and letter of all the younger, 'most dear and honoured father.'

The relation of it all, in his own thought of it, to what by a somewhat unhappy technicality is known as 'the religious life,' is a point difficult and interesting, strongly displaying the contrasts of his nature. No one who reads Dr. Jebb can think he desired to make nuns of all his nieces, maidens 'designed for wives' with the slightly comic outspokenness of their day. Indeed, he once breaks out that 'the name of nuns is odious.' Yet his deepest soul rejoices in the self-dedication to virginity of Mary and Anna, who afterwards are 'ever his great care.' Earnest to dissociate himself from all praise of celibacy, he yet 'courteously declined a very agreeable person with a great fortune' ('an offer with importunity repeated,' by the lady's father, *bien entendu*) because he was 'resolved not to marry at all.' We need always to remember the facts of Ferrar's life. There is no suggestion that this lady attracted him, and he had already an ideally congenial home. Like John Inglesant

(surely his spiritual cousin), Ferrar, who 'did verily believe the Pope to be Antichrist,' is not understood when we forget his foreign travels. Memories of cloistered gardens at Padua, of cool convent churches and dark-robed women with silent eyes, were part of both men. And Gidding church still silently witnesses to a passion for all things beautiful and ordered, fostered by days in Rome.

Idleness and Mary Ferrar, who at eighty rose daily at four (a later-lying generation learns with relief that they all went to bed at seven), who never lost a tooth, and 'heard 12,000 (!) sermons in her lifetime,' could not exist in one place together; and Gidding, true to the wall motto in 'the concordance room'—'Innocency is never better lodged than at the sign of labour'—neglects not that portion of worship which is work. In 'the large, great chamber fairly hung,' with its 'pair of organs' and its 'good warm fire, lit before five in the morning,' where, breakfast over and the boys gone to school, she 'set herself down in a chair, her constant place,' young and old gathered round her 'in great silence, either at their book, their needleworks, or otherwise, and each hour had its employment, making the concordance, their singing, their playing on their instruments, and so never idle.' The younger children were drilled by Nicholas, whose calligraphy is a delight to look upon, in the gentle arts of 'fair writing' and pleasant reading aloud; he made little religious books on purpose for them.

We know their 'chambers, closets, gardens, and walks of pleasure,' the 'ancient dove-house, dis-pigeoned' to make a school, because it became not those who owned only pasture to 'harbour little thieves to devour their neighbours' corn'; their 'places for running and vaulting and shooting at butts with bows and arrows.' In the still-room and the infirmary the ladies, 'fine surgeons,' who 'kept by them all manner of salves, oils, and balsams,' were 'none of them nice of dressing with their own hands poor people's wounds'; though wise uncle Nicholas, having learnt some knowledge of it at Padua, warned them off 'prescribing of phisike.'

A special work of theirs, which brought them the oft-told royal visit, leads us nearer to that one of the party who, after the grandmother with whom as a child she lived and whom she greatly resembled, has perhaps the tenderest hold on us.

Some sixty years ago a young couple, going to housekeeping

and buying with its furniture a little house in Kent owned by a dead connoisseur, fell possessed of a fine inlaid Cinquecento cabinet. Its walls of Italian walnut are filled with narrow secret drawers; but the only treasure found within lies before me as I write. The little brown book has a cover richly embossed in gold toolings round the letters C.R. Its frontispiece shows a kneeling gentleman in royal ermine, into whose left eye a bright ray from a heavenly crown descends, the crown of England lying at his feet. Its title is

Εἰκὼν Βασιλική

The Pourtraicture of His Sacred Majestie in His Solitudes and Sufferings.
Whereunto are annexed His Praiers and Apophthegms.

More precious than cover, picture, or tiny silken marker with its knotted ends, is the old embrowned fly-leaf. For in a curled and twisted hand, and clear though faded ink, it says :

This book was bound at Little Giding in Huntingtongshire by ye much celebrated Mrs. Mary Colet ye beloved Neece of ye famous Mr. Nicolas Farar, who honour'd her wth ye title of ye Chief of his most pious Society.

I leave ye Book as a valuable jewel to my Son who in his childhood was very deare to ye St. who presented me ye book and who bound it wth her own hands.

ANNE GRIGG,
March 1678.

A reader of to-day does not quite forgive a romancist of thirty years ago (when critics were less strict) his liberties with this gentle saint, her simple life, and its real records. A generation later Mr. Shorthouse would have chosen Elizabeth, Margaret, Hester, Joyce, or Judith Collet, of whom nothing is known beyond their subsequent husbands and occasional visits to their 'sister Mapletoft,' as the heroine of Inglesant's love-story. At the date of his visit Mary Collet was twice his age : she never left England, and died (*pace* Mr. Shorthouse) in her eightieth year, after bringing up to maturity two Mapletoft nephews and a niece. From twenty-three she had resolved to 'end her days in a virgin estate'; and there is not a hint—in these naïve records there would probably have been—that any man approached or touched her heart. 'And this desyre I hope hath been of and from God,' says a pathetic and ancient letter, burnt at the edges, and without signature or date, 'and I here professe in the sight of Heven that the choice be freely my own.' Shy Sister Anna's letter in the same sense is read by Nicholas 'in Mary's

presence,' her messenger. When the grandmother, growing old, resigned the headship of 'the little Academy,' a debating society within the family which, with much quaintness, learning, and a delightful humour, carried on, upon holy days, a sort of serious game of story-telling and mutual instruction, Mary, first 'the Chiefe,' became 'the Mother.' Five years after Nicholas' death (when the records cease) civil war broke over the land. The quiet house, away from the road, was a refuge of fugitives, numbering among them Charles himself. But it was not till 1646 that, attention being drawn to them by a scurrilous and silly tract called 'The Arminian Nunnery,' the Ferrars themselves were attacked. The spoilers—chiefly aiming, as it seems, at plunder—roasted a sheep before the blazing church organ and went away with what plate and furniture they could. The family, flying at their approach, soon after returned to their quiet home, and, repairing its breaches, lived on in a seclusion which seems to have protected them. John Ferrar and Susanna Collet both died in 1657, and Mary was for a time the head of the family. We know not where she died, and seek in vain at Gidding for her grave.

The June sun is sinking. The pilgrim must turn reluctant feet back to 'the turmoil of this world.' He lingers once more to realise this 'green thought in a green shade' before it drops back into the Greater Peace; whence, as the trees close round Gidding and his wheels spin away towards the high road, he passes (unless he, too, be of the true mystics who never leave it) into an exile called 'the life that is alive.' The tall door with its carven pillar is locked on the silent shrine: no maiden sisters will come to-night to keep it 'fairly and sweetly adorned with herbs and flowers,' or renew the 'great virgin-wax candles.' The dust settles over shrouded font and lectern, as westering shadows lengthen on the brothers' graves. Was it worth while, poor pilgrim, this effort to awaken those who, two and a-half centuries ago, went with their ordered house the way of all the earth? Are they not all part of the bygone? and thine own vivid age a thing quick with promise and calling and beauty? A living dog, even proverbially, is better than a dead lion.

Yet he has done it. While men think eagerly and love fervently—while, that is, our race is alive—so long shall we yearn after silent voices and vanished hands, even those never known in the flesh. The hand of the Past is mighty on us. Behind

an altered landscape and crumbling records dwells an ever-human reality that persists. For the thing that hath been is the thing that shall be. Gidding calls us because neither in our age nor in another shall the dreamer of saintly dreams, the seer of a spiritual vision, perish out of the land.

While the undying Quest is with us, rare and distant in all ages as Arthur's horn among the hills, there will always be knights to ride on it. They will not fail us in a day whose heroes are the pioneer, the explorer, the unrewarded and unrecorded martyr in every cause that can move the spirit of man. For us a certain still small voice still 'witnessing murmurs, persistent and low,' amid the clash of empires, the loud voices of ancient sorrows and new hopes. For are not we a generation (if we dare trust our wisest) that is crying ever increasingly after the 'spiritual,' the 'unseen'? Led by religion on the one hand, by science on the other, are we not daily seeking in worlds beyond our ken, health of body and wisdom of the soul, aiding of the living and communion with the dead? Surely, while such an earth remaineth, Nicholas Ferrars and Mary Collets shall not cease.

MARY J. H. SKRINE.

SIXTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS.

MORE PASSAGES BY THE WAY.

BY HENRY LUCY.

XVII.

EXPLORERS SIX.

STANLEY AND NANSEN.

I FIRST met Henry Stanley in the early 'seventies on his return from his quest of Livingstone. He had completed a narrative of his journey for which all the world was waiting. Lately home from Paris I filled the part of a struggling journalist, my sheet-anchor being an engagement to write a weekly London letter for a Birmingham paper newly started under the editorship of George Dawson. It was fully two thousand words in length, and brought me in what I regarded as the satisfactory sum of one guinea. It struck me it would be a good thing if I could get an advance copy of Stanley's work so as to place my Birmingham paper on a footing with the London journals in the matter of early review. It is a matter of course in these days. Forty years ago it was an attractive novelty.

Stanley's headquarters were the office of the *New York Herald*, on whose staff he ranked as special correspondent. I remember making my way up a narrow ill-lit stairway, knocking at a door, being bidden by a gruff voice to 'Come in,' and finding myself in a dingy room in the presence of the man with whose fame Europe and America were ringing.

'Well,' he said.

In reply to this laconic inquiry I murmured my name, which would not convey any impression to his mind favourable or otherwise; told him of my connection with the Birmingham paper, and my desire to write a review of his book if I could secure an advance copy. He looked me up and down and, as I uncomfortably felt, through and through. Then he said shortly, 'You shall have one. Write down your address.' This I did, and in due time an early copy of 'Darkest Africa' duly reached me, affording text for an extra column and a half in the *Birmingham Morning News*.

As far as I remember, and I was not likely to forget the incident had it happened, I did not meet Stanley again for twenty years. On the second occasion he was back in London after rescuing Emin Pasha from captivity. The occasion was a big reception given by Sir John and Lady Pender, at their house in Arlington Street, 'to meet the King of the Belgians.' On entering the crowded room I caught sight of Stanley standing a little way back from the doorway. He was easily recognisable from photographs that flooded the land. I went up to him and said: 'I don't suppose you will know me.'

He turned upon my face the searchlight of his eyes as he had done in the office in Fleet Street twenty years earlier, and after a moment's pause said: 'Why, you're Henry Lucy.'

Thereafter acquaintance ripened into friendship, which drew closer when he became a Member of the House of Commons and I had more frequent opportunity of seeing him. Constitutionally reticent, I never heard him make complaint, but have no doubt he was disappointed in his Parliamentary career. Unaccustomed to meet with, still less to admit, defeat in any enterprise undertaken, he confidently counted on conquest of the House of Commons. He made three or four efforts to establish ascendancy, but failed in the attempt. A man entering the House with a great reputation won elsewhere is always handicapped in the race. To begin with, Stanley knew nothing about politics, had little sympathy with Parliamentary manners and ways of thought, and entered on the new world too late to fall in with them.

Outside of Parliament, when deeply moved by his subject, he could rise to heights of simple eloquence. I remember a speech he made at a banquet given in his honour by the Turners' Company. Nothing could exceed the graphic touches with which he pictured his starving men in the wilderness, the departure of the band of foreigners, his journey in search of them, and the voice of agony expressive of utter hopelessness of the Moslem who cried aloud, 'Allah is great!'

He told me a curious thing with respect to this speech. He had been hard at work revising proofs of his book, and with other engagements was so beset that he was not able to carry out the custom adopted by him since his return of preparing his speech in manuscript. He had not a scrap of notes with him, nor had even thought of what he should say. He anticipated a breakdown, not being accustomed to extemporaneous speech, and through the

dinner somewhat gloomily faced the prospect. Seeing the people all about him bountifully feeding, there came back to his mind an episode of his journey when he and his men had not for six weeks eaten a bit of meat, nor for ten days seen a banana or a handful of grain, and for whom (130 of them) he made broth with a pound of butter and a tin of condensed milk.

Then he thought he would just tell this simple story, and was surprised to find how profoundly it interested the company. At first he spoke in a low voice with hesitating manner. As he went on before the intently listening audience he became master of himself and spoke splendidly.

After his return from the Emin Pasha Expedition, Stanley was subject to recurrent sickness, the legacy of hardships suffered in his journeys through the wilds of Central Africa. Whilst still in the House he told me he never knew from week to week, even from day to day, when the lurking fiend might not suddenly spring upon him, laying him helpless in bed. When he resolved to give up the hopeless fight, retiring from the turmoil of life in London, he built for himself a house in Surrey. He looked forward to entertaining once a year such remnant of men who had served with him in his various expeditions as were within hail. When the house was finished it turned out that only two men sat at the dining-table—Stanley and Jephson, who commanded a detachment of the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition which set forth on its mission in 1887.

In the spring of 1890 Stanley was the lion of the season. He dined out every night, the companion of Kings, Ministers, Dukes, and even Archbishops, of whose part in the life of the nation it would have been interesting to hear his private opinion. After dinner there was usually a reception, to which were bidden the rank, wealth, talent, and beauty of London. Stanley went through it all in his dogged, determined manner, marching through the affluence of London life as fifteen or sixteen months earlier he crept wearily through the famine-stricken wilderness of Central Africa. He was not a brilliant conversationalist. On the contrary, he had a distinctly depressing influence on the small talkers of the dinner-table. When they chattered to him in fashion they had found fascinating in other circumstances, Stanley had a way of saying nothing—of itself embarrassing. Added thereto was a habit of turning upon the countenance of the chatterer a stern, resolute face, lighted up by a pair of exceedingly penetrating eyes, which pierced

through and through his companion, whether man or woman. He talked volubly enough in the society of two or three friends. At the dinner-table—where he knew he sat fulfilling much the same purpose of attraction as good wine, fair flowers, rich ornaments, or a well-cooked meal—he was provokingly taciturn.

Still he was dominated by sense of duty, and fulfilled it at whatever sacrifice of personal inclination. By continual practice he fell into regular habits at social gatherings. He always stood at the entrance of a room, some paces in the rear of his hostess, and after she had received the guests at the door they passed on to 'find Stanley,' who looked at everyone with the same steadfast stare as if he were in search of a long-lost brother or sister. In briefest phrase he made reply to the commonplace of greeting or the exclamation of delight that at last he (or she) was privileged to shake by the hand so great an explorer.

Stanley, by the way, had for a man who had grasped so many difficulties a very small hand. He did not wear gloves, and was evidently not ashamed of the fact that his hands were decidedly red and growing crinkly. He did not dress well, the cut of his clothes suggesting that they were made in his native village in Wales. But his strong face and massive head distinguished him above his fellows.

At the reception already alluded to given by Sir John Pender to meet the King of the Belgians, there was something almost comical in the contrast between the King and Stanley, as they stood together in conversation or walked about the room. His Majesty was over six feet high, Stanley under five feet five inches. The King had a kindly but weak face. Stanley's face and head might have been carved out of a rock by some Titan sculptor. The King spoke excellent English in a soft, gentle voice. Stanley's notes were guttural, and when he spoke rapidly, with rare approach to excitement, one could distinctly notice an accent that betrayed his birth at Denbigh and his school days at St. Asaph. As the two men strolled through the brilliant throng, it was pretty to see the ladies curtsying and the gentlemen bowing to the tall, mild-featured, tailor-made man, whom the accident of family circumstance had made a king, whilst they permitted themselves to stand erect as Stanley brushed by. Yet if there was a king of men in the room it certainly was not Leopold II.

Among the throng stood a tall, white-haired gentleman, with beetling snow-white eyebrows, the broad red ribbon of the Bath showing under the folds of his waistcoat. A grey-haired lady brought him in and never left his side, piloting him through the crowd, gently leading him to some comparatively quiet couch, where they sat together, she telling him of the many people he knew who chanced to pass by. The feeble old man, with tottering steps and blinded eyes, so pathetically dependent on the care of a woman, was once known as Robert Lowe, fiercest swordsman in the political fray. It was the merest wreck, whether of mind or body, that survived under the title, Viscount Sherbrooke. Though hopelessly enfeebled, the old indomitable spirit prevailed to the extent that he at that time (May 1890) positively declined to drop out of either Parliamentary circles or society. He did not go out to dinner. But if he were asked to a reception at a well-known house he went, even if he had to be led like a child.

Stanley made a small fortune as a lecturer. On his last tour he rightly thought he had undergone sufficient hardships in his journey through Central Africa, and decided not to rough it in future travel. In his engagement with the agent who arranged his tour in the United States, he stipulated that he should have a private car in which he might not only travel, but feed and sleep. Colonel Pond cheerily agreed to this request, having a car specially constructed for the use of the lecturer and his bride, who accompanied him on the journey.

Stanley's remuneration for his lectures was on the same princely scale. For his first he received 1,000*l.*, and 100*l.* for each repetition. This compared favourably with his previous lecturing tour, following on his discovery of Livingstone. He then contracted to deliver a series of lectures at a fee of 25*l.* each.

I came across Nansen once or twice at a time when he was completing preparations for his expedition to the North Pole. At dinner one night he gave us some interesting particulars. He was having a ship specially built. It was only 170 tons burden and the crew all told would be a dozen men. Compared with other expeditions this seemed a frail equipment. But the whole thing had been carefully considered and was based upon a scheme which at least had novelty to recommend it. The story of the origin of the expedition which Nansen could tell in four languages was romantic. Some years earlier an expedition to the North Pole had been made

in the ship *Jeannette*, under the direction of De Long. The *Jeannette*, like a long line of predecessors, came to grief, being nipped by ice-floes and sent to the bottom. Three years after there were found near Julianshaab, in Greenland, certain articles which the crew of the *Jeannette* had left with the wreck at the time of its abandonment. These had been carried from the opposite side of the Polar Sea to the coast of Greenland on a piece of ice.

How this rare flotsam and jetsam made the journey was a problem that greatly excited Arctic experts, who finally came to the conclusion that there must be a short direct route across the Arctic Ocean by way of the North Pole. Nansen determined to start out to find this way, and the Norwegian Parliament voted him a sum of money estimated to cover his expenses. He proposed to take provisions for five years, and, getting his ship in the place where the *Jeannette* went down, he hoped in time to drift across the mystic sea that encircles the North Pole, turning up three years later on the coast of Greenland. The fate of the *Jeannette* was kept in view in building the new ship. She was so constructed that she could not be crushed by the ice, but if nipped would be simply forced up from the water to the top of the floe.

¶ This is the story of the famous *Fram* as told by its Captain whilst she was yet on the stocks. Among other stories Nansen told (he spoke English fluently) was one that strikingly illustrates the sort of men the Lapps are. Part of his equipment for his trip across Greenland consisted of two sleeping-bags made of undressed skins. On the first night of the journey Nansen and his two Norwegian companions got into one of the bags, pulled the mouth tight across their necks, and so slept in the snow with only their heads out. Before retiring to rest Nansen saw the three Lapps he had engaged for the expedition cosily tucked into the other. When he awoke in the morning, almost numb with cold, he observed that the bag in which he had tied up the Lapps was empty, and they nowhere in sight. Afraid they had deserted him, he scrambled out of his bag, went in search of them, and found them fast asleep behind a hillock of snow which they had scraped together as protection against the wind.

'Ah, master,' they said when asked to explain this extraordinary conduct, 'we couldn't sleep in that thing. It was too hot, so we got out and have had a comfortable night here.'

I observed that Nansen took no wine. Never in his direst straits did he cheer himself with anything in the shape of alcoholic

liquor. 'The only use I ever made of brandy during my tour through Greenland,' he said, 'was to melt the snow when we wanted water. It does that admirably.'

His adventurous career was nearly cut off on the threshold. The first thing he did to call attention to himself was to cross at Christmas time the mountain range that separates Christiania from Bergen. No human foot had ever before trodden these wilds. Young Nansen set out with no companion save his dog, no means of conveyance other than a pair of ski. Night after night he slept in the snowdrifts, his dog clasped in his arms. Standing on the topmost crag, in sight of Bergen, he determined to go down a little quicker than he had toiled up. Ski-ing down the slope at lightning speed, he continued for about half a mile, when he shot off into a crevasse, and was buried nearly up to the neck in snow. It was a terrible shaking, but no bones were broken, and picking himself up he completed the descent more cautiously.

EXPLORERS SIX—*Continued.*

SIR HARRY JOHNSTON, SVEN HEDIN,

SIR ERNEST SHACKLETON, DR. SCHLIEMANN.

One night in the summer of 1897, at a supper courageously given by Lord Justice Fletcher Moulton in the garden of his house in Onslow Square, I met Sir Harry Johnston. I happened to sit at a little table with Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and the founder of the British Central Africa Protectorate, and C.-B. made us acquainted with each other. Later in the same year Sir Harry was appointed British Consul-General of the Regency of Tunis, and before he left to fill his post it was arranged that my wife and I should pay Lady Johnston and him a visit.

We had occasion to remember the approach to what proved a happy time. We left Marseilles at the end of November in a flood of glorious sunlight, steaming over a summer sea with promise of a delightful voyage to the African coast. Entering the Gulf of Lyons shortly after dinner we found everything had suffered a sea change. In a journey round the world I have crossed several big oceans, including the Pacific, so called because it can be exceptionally tumultuous. Only once have I had such experience on ship-board as was suffered in this French passenger boat making a twenty-four hours' trip across what might be regarded as nothing more than a

huge lake. The other occasion was a voyage in an old tub of 250 tons from Yokohama to Yokkaichi. Crossing the Gulf of Lyons a number of our fellow-passengers were English ladies resident in Malta, who had been to Paris to replenish their wardrobe and were returning home *via* Tunis. Throughout the long night the cabins were impartially flooded, trunks containing the treasured garments floating nearly level with the sleeping-berths.

Early in the night we were kept awake by thunderous noise on deck, followed in the course of an hour by sudden cessation. In the morning I learned that a cask of wine lashed on deck, breaking away, stumbled from larboard to starboard as the ship rolled and, finally crashing through the bulwarks, fell into the sea. At day-break a big wave swept the captain off the bridge, and by a curious whirl washed him back on deck astern. We were twenty-four hours late on a short passage, arriving at Bizerta breakfastless, for the sufficient reason that every article of crockery on board was smashed to atoms.

But that is another story.

Arriving at Tunis we found our host and hostess located some seven miles out of the town, in an old Arab palace presented by the Bey to the British Government. Within ten minutes' drive of the house over which the British flag flew lay the ruins of ancient Carthage. During our stay we frequently visited the historic spot. Of thrice-built Carthage nothing is left save scraps of dug-out ruins. But the situation remains one of the most beautiful in the world—a promontory abutting on a blue sea, the horizon bounded by shadowy hills. We were promised the additional pleasure of the company of Sir William Harcourt, who at the time was interested in what is the most successful effort at colonising ever achieved by France. Expressing desire to study the problem on the spot he accepted an invitation from the Consul-General to visit Tunis. More pressing engagements interfered with his plans. It was a thousand pities, as he would have found Carthage not less interesting than Tunis. A pleasant picture rose before the imaginative mind of the Squire of Malwood stroking a meditative chin as he gazed on all that is left of the city that Dido founded, that Regulus stormed, whence Hannibal set forth to conquer Spain.

Sir Harry Johnston is a man of diverse parts. If he had not given himself up to a life of adventure and administration he would by this time have been a Royal Academician. If he had devoted

himself to music he would have reached a high position. Had literature been his sole mistress he would have been in the first rank of authors. As it is he has written successful books, plays the piano with masterly touch, and has his pictures hung on the line at Burlington House. During the month we stayed with him he was hard at work upon a painting which, apart from its technical skill and artistic value, was remarkable as reproducing a tropical scene few painters have had the opportunity of studying.

The domestic household of the Arab palace was a microcosm of the picturesquely mingled population of Tunis. Of more than a dozen servants not two were of the same nationality. There were Parthians, Medes, Persians, and dwellers in Mesopotamia. The cook was an Italian who, I gathered, lived for the greater part of the day with his back to the kitchen wall, a dagger in his hand, prepared to beat off attacks consequent on contumelious language addressed by him to his motley assistants. Their limited knowledge of Italian did not enable them to master the full purport of his remarks. They shrewdly guessed they were not complimentary, and were angry accordingly.

Sir Harry told me a story picturesquely illustrating life in these conditions. He had given a dinner party to diplomatic colleagues in Tunis. The meal was so well cooked that he sent for the *chef* to compliment him. It happened that the message arrived whilst the cook in circumstances indicated happened to be with his back to the kitchen wall. Arrived in the presence of his master he was almost foaming with rage, gesticulating dangerously with his unsheathed dagger. After unavailing remonstrance, and prolonged disobedience to the command to leave the room, it became evident that strong measures were necessary. Like Napoleon and some other eminent men who need not be particularised, the founder of the British Central Africa Protectorate is not a person of commanding height. Of the two the irate cook was taller and brawnier. Something had to be done, and without a moment's hesitation Sir Harry sprang upon him, disarmed him, and led him forth in the direction of the kitchen.

'I was still in dinner dress,' Sir Harry said, 'wearing my Grand Cross of St. Michael and St. George. During the struggle the thing, suspended loosely from my neck, dangled in absurd fashion, threatening every moment to snap at the chain. It was rather a serious moment. But I could not help laughing at the

incongruity of the thing—the cook lying on his back, kicking, my Grand Cross scraping his face as it wagged to and fro.’

Lord Salisbury, whilst Prime Minister, had a high opinion of Sir Harry Johnston’s administrative capacity, which seemed to promise advancement in the Service. On his return from Tunis in 1899 he was appointed Special Commissioner, Commander-in-Chief, and Consul-General for the Uganda Protectorate. The mission was accomplished with additional success. But its fulfilment was not marked by further engagements by the Foreign Office, the direction of whose affairs had by the death of Lord Salisbury passed into other hands.

Dr. Sven Hedin I met at dinner at the Swedish Minister’s house shortly after his return from his journey through Asia from Orenburg to Pekin *via* Lop-nor and Thibet. I found that like Nansen he spoke English fluently with almost imperceptible accent. He told me that at his earliest school tuition in the English language formed part of the curriculum. There are few educated people in Sweden who do not speak and write the tongue. He had, however, a natural gift, common with other famous explorers, notably Colonel Fred Burnaby, of quickly picking up a foreign language. During his stay in Thibet he acquired sufficient knowledge of the vernacular to enable him to get about. It is, he said, like much else in the country, absolutely unique, having nothing in common either with Russian, Chinese, or the many dialects of India. Like Stanley and Sir Harry Johnston, Dr. Hedin is somewhat below the average height, also like them sturdily built. He showed no traces of the privations endured through his memorable expedition.

I find in my diary of the year 1900 entry of a conversation with Captain Scott, about to start in the *Discovery* on his first search for the South Pole. It was at a little farewell dinner given to him at the Savoy Hotel. Nine years later I dined at the same hotel, but in a much larger room, one of a company gathered at the invitation of Mr. Heinemann to meet Lieutenant Shackleton (not yet knighted) on his return from the Antarctic regions, where he had planted his flag considerably nearer the South Pole than the foot of man had hitherto trodden. He told me that as one of Captain Scott’s officers—he ranked as third lieutenant on board the *Discovery*—he had been present on the earlier occasion. It was quite in accordance with his modest manner that he then passed unnoticed.

Returning to London to find himself the hero of the day he had lost nothing of his almost boyish appearance. I did not at the time know his age, but as in conversation he maintained that the ideal age of an Arctic voyager is thirty, I suppose that was about the number of his years when he returned almost victor of the South Pole. Three of his mates who were present at the dinner were equally youthful in appearance. Remembering their privations, which finally reached a stage when starvation actually gripped them, they looked the perfection of health.

Shackleton told a pretty story illustrative of the daily life of the expedition and of the sort of men who composed it. One day he and his three officers, having finished their scanty meal, were hungrier than ever. As they trudged along through the soft snow, dragging their sledge, they agreed with each other that if they lived to reach home, and ever saw a hungry man or child flattening his nose against the window of a cook-shop, they would take care that straightway he had a good square meal.

After dinner Mr. Heinemann's guests had the advantage of seeing what was equal to a living representation of daily life with the expedition. Dr. Forbes Mackay, who accompanied it, is an expert photographer. Whilst his comrades were loading or unloading their sleighs, fixing or furling their tents, trudging through the snow or, tired out with the day's work, gratefully disappearing into their sleeping-bags, he took snapshots with his camera. These, thrown on the screen by the cinematograph, brought into the heart of London, in a room where a sumptuous banquet was spread, the daily doings of the gallant little band doggedly making their way to the South Pole.

On the back of the menu card was presented the picture of an old man, bearded, bareheaded, clad in thick jersey, with hands crossed and clasped. It bore the initials 'E. H. S.' and the date 'February 1899.' It suggested an applicant for an old-age pension, whose claim to have reached the statutory age was only slightly dubious. It was actually Lieutenant Shackleton as he appeared at that date, still in search of the Pole. By accidental effect of light his beard and moustache looked grey, and his body a little bowed as if with age. Returning to civilisation he was clean shaven.

In the following August I had fuller opportunity of making Shackleton's acquaintance, we being fellow-guests on the *Armada* Castle at the review of the Fleet at Spithead when King George was accompanied by the Czar. The fortuitous meeting was happy

in more respects than one, since it enabled me to do the explorer some service. To the outsider it appeared that Shackleton's Antarctic expedition had been crowned not only with honour but by considerable monetary advantage. His book, published by Mr. Heinemann, appeared simultaneously in this country, the United States, Canada, and Australia. Its circulation on the Continent promised to beat the record of British books. Nine translators had been at work turning the chapters into the language of their several nations. Such a work naturally commanded a high fee for the author.

In supplement Shackleton had accepted a proposal to deliver a series of lectures in the United States, for which handsome pay was guaranteed. Together these sources of revenue appeared to make provision of a modest competency for life. Quite by accident I became acquainted with the facts. Shackleton was not the man to go about whining at the cruel irony of fate. I learned the story indirectly from Mrs. Shackleton, who confided it to my wife. It appeared that not a penny of the proceeds of the book or the lecturing tour, in themselves combining a task almost equal in arduousness to another Antarctic expedition, would go into Shackleton's pocket. It was mortgaged in advance to pay off the costs of the expedition. When that was planned he had at his back the financial assistance of a small group of Americans. At a period when he was absolutely pledged to the enterprise, and had incurred considerable preliminary cost, there befell a financial crisis on the other side of the Atlantic which brought ruin on a wide circle of erstwhile wealthy men. Among them were the backers of the new Antarctic expedition.

In these suddenly disheartening circumstances Shackleton approached a London bank, and upon his personal guarantee and that of members of his own and his wife's family raised a loan of 20,000*l.*, by which means the great achievement was accomplished. On returning from closest touch with the South Pole yet reached by man the Australian Legislature voted a sum of 5,000*l.* as a contribution to its expenses; New Zealand supplemented this by another 1,000*l.* The British Treasury declined to contribute to the fund, and Shackleton, saddled with the responsibility for 14,000*l.*, was left to meet the charge out of his own resources.

It appeared to me that if the truth were made known to the public the reproach of leaving the gallant explorer in the lurch would not lie against this country. I accordingly wrote a signed

article in one of the London morning papers, simply setting forth the facts. Before noon on the day of publication the editor received a letter from a well-known public man suggesting the opening of a public subscription which the writer headed with a cheque for 500*l*. It happened, however, that the brief article had attracted the attention of the Prime Minister. On reading it he sent for Shackleton, and the result of the conversation was that the explorer received a Treasury grant of 20,000*l*., which handsomely covered the deficit in the cost of the expedition, leaving its leader in possession of the private earnings he had set aside for that purpose.

Shackleton made rare acknowledgment of this small service. Preparing the chart of his Antarctic route which accompanied his book he gave names to three mountains discovered by him and marked thereon. One was Mount Asquith, a second Mount Harcourt (after the Colonial Secretary), the third Mount Henry Lucy.

Dr. Schliemann is not an explorer in the wide sense of the word as applied to others here written of. But his explorations have added much to knowledge of the ancient world. I met him in 1890, when breakfasting in Berkeley Square with Sir John Lubbock, now Lord Avebury. In personal appearance he much resembled the typical Lutheran pastor with whom his home days were spent. He was dressed in quaintly-cut black clothes, with long gold chain festooned about his neck and waistcoat. Even at the breakfast-hour he was to be seen in a white necktie. He spoke a dozen languages, and if all were as excellent as his English he had a fresh claim to distinction.

More than fifty years earlier he began life in a grocer's shop at Fürstenburg, where he spent five years. He told me that he never smells a herring without there flashing upon his fancy the grocer's shop and the little boy in a blouse sorting the fish, dispensing the butter, and filling up spare time by grinding potatoes, out of which a dubious liquid was distilled. From five in the morning till ten or eleven at night he grubbed away, excavating in the butter cask with all the diligence and single-mindedness with which in later years he turned up the priceless treasures hidden at Mycenæ and Tirynæ.

Out of the grocer's shop Schliemann, just verging on twenty, got a place as clerk with a mercantile firm at Amsterdam. A

few years later he set up in business on his own account at St. Petersburg, and quickly made a fortune. This done he devoted himself to archæological investigation, his work being described in memorable books. At the time I met him he lived in princely state at Athens. Before he left for his visit to London he was hard at work in Crete, where he found fresh tombs and made excavations new.

XVIII.

MEMORIES.

MR. GLADSTONE AND SCOTCH DISESTABLISHMENT.

When in 1890 Mr. Gladstone went to Scotland on his fourth Midlothian campaign he was hampered by the Established Church question. Three-fourths of the members of the Established Church were Liberals and Home Rulers. But they were Churchmen first. On the other hand, there was an influential section of the Liberal party who, reckoning upon Mr. Gladstone's proximate return to power, insisted that the opportunity should be seized to disestablish the Church.

Between these contending factions the wary Old Parliamentary Hand found himself in an embarrassing position. For his own part he was chiefly bent upon attempt to retrieve the rout of 1886 and carry a Home Rule Bill. He was advised by experts in Scottish politics that failure to raise the standard of Disestablishment would appreciably weaken his cause. On the other hand, there was the influential section who insisted that the Disestablishment question should be left entirely outside the battlefield upon which the contending hosts were already marching. At a succeeding General Election they would not shrink from the inevitable struggle. But the forthcoming fight must, they insisted, be solely fought on Home Rule, relegating the Disestablishment question for decision at the General Election ensuing.

Having some personal knowledge of the situation in Scotland, and probably not altogether unmindful of an avowedly constant reader of my London Letter in the *Liverpool Daily Post*, I set forth the case in a couple of paragraphs published at a brief interval. The second brought me the following postcard written from Hawarden.

'DEAR MR. LUCY,—I quite understood your first paragraph in the London Letter, but feared you had interpreted favourably the demand made upon us. I fear the true interpretation is

according to your citation in the London Letter which appears to-day, viz. that I myself and the whole party are to engage to take no step, give no vote on the matter referred to, until the next Parliament but one. A large order. Hoping we may meet, I remain,

‘ Faithfully yours,
‘ W. E. G.’

Arriving later to open the Campaign which resulted in the defeat of the Unionist party, Mr. Gladstone was convinced that on a balance of technical advantage it was judicious to keep the Disestablishment question in the background, where it remains to this day. Declaring to win on Home Rule he came in first, though only by a neck, represented by a majority of forty.

During this his penultimate visit to Edinburgh, I saw a good deal of Mr. Gladstone not only in public but in social life. Twice I sat near him at dinner on evenings following the delivery of two of his most exhaustive speeches. When a man has spent the morning in making the latest preparations for an important speech, and has given up the afternoon to delivering it, he is prone to look forward to a quiet evening, through which he may rest. That was not Mr. Gladstone’s way. Always, at whatever dinner-table he sat, he was the life and soul of the party. I never saw him so lively or so irrepressible in energy as he was at dinner at Buchanan’s (the member for West Edinburgh), on the night of his afternoon speech in the Music Hall, the longest, and, from the variety of topics dealt with, the most difficult of his addresses.

The flow of his talk was unceasing, his topics infinite in their variety. Whatever by chance came up he knew all about it, was able to convey some new fact or some fresh impression. His liveliness was due to no spasmodic energy, with relapse after the strain of work. He simply talked because he was in highest spirits and almost perfect health—not in the least like ‘ the old man in a hurry ’ of Lord Randolph’s kindly but misleading imagination. Always eager to learn new things, to whatever department of human life they belong, he had recently discovered that Pilsener beer is a beverage that may be taken at luncheon with refreshment and without subsequent regret. The enthusiasm of the few days following this discovery led to what might have proved a regrettable accident. Having occasion to answer a communication from Mr. Pulitzer, the proprietor of a great American newspaper, Mr. Gladstone, sitting down just before the luncheon hour, began his letter,

'Dear Mr. Pilsener.' He had finished his missive, signed it, and set it aside before, by accident, the little mistake was discovered.

There are few changes in Parliamentary procedure that have had more revolutionary effect upon the habits of London Society than the transference to Friday's sitting of the House of Commons the conditions from time immemorial dominating Wednesdays. Up to a comparatively recent period the House adjourned not later than six o'clock on Wednesdays, leaving the evening free for the fulfilment of social engagements. The consequence was that hostesses who desired to secure the company of members of the House of Commons fixed their dinners for Wednesday nights. Now the House sits on Wednesdays till 11 o'clock or after, Friday being the early closing day.

The old arrangement was particularly inconvenient for me, seeing that Wednesday evening is set apart for Mr. Punch's dinner, and, not being a bird, I was habitually compelled to renounce Parliamentary dinners, some of which I would fain have attended. On rare occasions through the session I yielded to temptation, and never failed to meet with rebuke from my esteemed editor. On one occasion, as I am reminded by looking over some old letters, his regret and remonstrance found expression in more or less idiomatic French, preserved even to the signature. Burnand and Boulanger both begin with a 'B.' There is other reason why he should have assumed the name of 'Le brav General.'

'Dear Lucy,' he wrote on May 16, 1890 :

'Je vous pardonne cette fois—mais à l'avenir essayez de faire votre présence (toujours si gracieuse) à la table de M. Punch le règle et votre absence (qui fait pousser l'amour au cœur) l'exception.

'Sammy, le petit Samuel, était très attristé sans son vis-à-vis, et comme Guthrie le gai et Gil le gaillard étaient aussi absents le bon et bouillant Bradbury se trouvait en grande force.

'Vous êtes toujours un fort souteneur de La Chaise. Sacrifiez donc quelques dîners parlementaires et montrez vous parmi vos collaborateurs et associés désolés.

'Agréez cher Tobie les sentiments de mon estime la plus distinguée.

'F. C. BOULANGER.'

'Sammy' was the name by which Linley Sambourne was affectionately known at the Table, across which weekly for nearly thirty years we faced each other.

FROM MY DIARY.—*January 20, 1890.*—It seems impossible even for the greatest men to say anything new in these days. Lord Beaconsfield's 'peace with honour' has been traced back to Burke. Mr. John Morley's 'mending or ending' the House of Lords has also a paternity of which, doubtless, Mr. Morley was unconscious when he framed the phrase. Looking to-day over Boswell's 'Life of Johnson,' I stumbled upon another of these odd coincidences of phraseology. One of the most familiar of Mr. Gladstone's historic phrases is that in which he on a memorable occasion approved the uprising of nationalities in the east of Europe, whom he described as 'a people rightly struggling to be free.' Close upon 130 years ago Dr. Johnson, writing to Boswell, lately home from his tour in Corsica, blurted out expression of the desire that he would 'empty his head of Corsica.' Whereto Boswell replied :

'How can you bid me empty my head of Corsica? My noble friend, do you not feel for an oppressed nation bravely struggling to be free?'

January 29.—Walking through the Royal Courts of Justice to-day I noticed that there were quite the average of judges snatching a brief nap. Nearly all do it, some more skilfully than others. The Lord Chief Justice (Coleridge) dozes with more than the weasel's wariness. As he sits on the Bench with closed eyes barristers accustomed to practise before him know very well when he is asleep. Where they fail is in knowledge of the precise moment at which he wakes. Some men having fallen asleep at the post of duty wake with a start, and by guilty embarrassment betray their secret. My Lord knows better than that. Having finished his sleep he remains in exactly the same position, with eyes closed and countenance immobile. Intently listening, he waits till a chance remark of the counsel provides opportunity to interpose with a comment, which he delivers with veiled eyes and unaltered posture.

The thing is so well done that for some terms it took in the acutest men at the Bar. They had thought the Judge slept. He was evidently listening. Else how could he make this opportune commentary, breaking in at the very moment when everyone looking on was certain that he was asleep? He was found out after a while, and when he does it now, with the same unerring grace and skill, the Bar smiles.

'They all do it,' a Q.C. in large practice said to-day. 'That's why I like appearing in cases *in banco*. Then you are sure at one

time or another during the delivery of your speech to have one judge awake.'

February 11.—The House of Lords meeting to-day misses a long-familiar presence. For many years there sat at the Table a little old gentleman in wig and gown. When the House rose the little old gentleman, divested of wig and gown, generally walked across the corridors to the House of Commons. Unchallenged he passed the watchful doorkeepers, and, if there was room, took his seat under the gallery, listening awhile to the debate, and then went off to dinner.

This was Mr. Disraeli, brother of the famous Conservative Premier, whose influence secured him the comfortable berth he has occupied for more than a generation as Clerk-assistant. He drew a salary of £1,800 a year, with an allowance of £300 a year for rent. Having now retired from office, he will have a snug pension.

Anyone more diametrically opposed to his brother in appearance and manner could not be imagined. A quiet, retiring, commonplace old gentleman, he was admirably fitted for the highly paid but mentally exhausting office he filled. Not brilliant, he was always courteous. Many at Westminster will regret this severance of a link with a name that will ever be associated with Parliament and its history.

February 13.—Mr. Balfour is back from Ireland, bringing a good story with him. During his stay in Dublin he met a Catholic priest who did not belong to the National party. Taking an opportunity favourable for obtaining information on an interesting point, he asked the priest if in his opinion the Irish people were as bitter against him as they were represented to be in the newspapers favourable to Mr. Parnell.

'Since you have asked me, I will tell you the truth,' said the priest. 'If our flocks hated sin half as cordially as they hate you, there would be no use for priests in Ireland.'

February 21.—All London has to-day been in compulsory mourning for Joseph Gillis Biggar. Long before the Irish members and their friends began to arrive at his modest lodgings near Clapham Common the pall of a dense fog fell over the Metropolis. Through the darkened streets the funeral procession slowly moved. Passers-by stopped to look at it, everyone seeming to know that this was the famous Irish Member, the hero of half a hundred all-night sittings, 'going home.'

The House of Commons was genuinely shocked and personally

distressed by news of his death. At the end of a life which, in its public aspects, had always something comic about it, there came a swift touch of tragedy which elevated Joseph Gillis to the pedestal of a hero. It was instinctively felt that he died a martyr to that strong sense of duty, that indomitable persistence in carrying out what he regarded as a good work, that strongly influenced his life. There was a time, not many years back, when all the scorn and contempt with which a large section of the House regarded their Irish colleagues was concentrated upon Biggar. There was a story popular in the Parliament of 1874. It told how the Member for Cavan, one night early in his Parliamentary career, catching the Speaker's eye, Disraeli, then Premier, put up his eyeglass and, regarding with well-feigned astonishment the misshapen figure, asked in startled whisper, 'What's *that* ?'

Biggar entered the House avowedly with a hostile spirit. According to his lights, which were limited, he deliberately set himself to bring the institution into contempt. He used to do and say the most extraordinary things, grinning maliciously when the House, incensed at his attack, howled at him. He lived all that down, and came in these later years to be quite a respectable, responsible, quietly-mannered elderly gentleman, a prime favourite with the House, not often speaking, but when he rose received with welcoming cheer, and listened to with kindly indulgence as he distilled words of homely wisdom.

There is many a man the House of Commons could have better spared than Joseph Gillis Biggar.

From Mr. Chamberlain :

' 40 Prince's Gardens, S.W.
February 22, '90.

' DEAR MR. LUCY,—Your note has gratified me very much. You have had more experience and opportunities for critical judgment than almost any other observer, and praise from you is not a mere empty compliment, but a testimony of which anyone might be proud.

' It is more than kind of you to have communicated your impression to me. In these days the ordinary portion of a Liberal Unionist is all kicks and no halfpence. On this account also your contribution is most thankfully received.

' Believe me,

Yours very truly,

J. CHAMBERLAIN.'

From James Payn, with a book :

‘June 25, 1890. “The Cornhill Magazine.”

‘DEAR LUCY (for I cannot say ‘Mr.’ to so kind a friend),—I am going out of town on July 5 for some days, which will prevent my taking advantage of your most promising invitation. But there is mostly (between ourselves) another reason. I am growing deaf, and I cannot help remembering that in general society I used to think a deaf man was a bore. If I did not hear Burnand’s jokes, and said ‘What?’ he would naturally be extremely angry; and this is the sadder for me because I used to hear jokes (and even understand some of them) quite easily.

‘However, thank Heaven, I can still read, and keep on owing you great debt of gratitude. But for you I should never know what is going on in the Parliament of my native land, for I cannot stand speeches. I only want to hear—I mean to see—what H. W. Lucy, M.P. for everywhere, says about it.

‘It just strikes me, though it is like sending coals to Newcastle, to post you my “Notes from the News”; pray do not trouble to acknowledge it, but merely accept it. My regards.

‘Yours most faithfully,

JAMES PAYN.’

*THE GRIP OF LIFE.*¹

BY AGNES AND EGERTON CASTLE

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

SOLITUDE AND REVELATION.

'AFTER a silence of three weeks (wrote John Gordon to his friend) I have your hurried note, telling me that you have given up your Greek explorations and have installed yourself in complete isolation in your ruined Keep—hoping, as you say, "to find your work and yourself again."

'It is not for me to conjecture (upon withheld confidence) what events have brought about this change of plans; but I should not be fulfilling what I deem incumbent upon me through our old relations were I not to set down clearly how much I disapprove.

'There would be some sense in your carrying out your working project; now your journey to Greece was, as we often agreed together, a very necessary undertaking in this regard. There would have been a good deal more sense in your putting aside, at least for the present, all literary aspirations and devoting yourself to your new duties and responsibilities as landowner. But there is no sense in your present arrangement; and the fact of your being inspired to adopt it by the legendary example of an ancestor does not make the proceeding more rational. (I presume you have forgotten you have already told me why that ancestor thus took to seclusion.)

'In one of your letters you reminded me that I had said, on hearing of your inheritance, "It seems a pity." It is true that I was then thinking "Here is my promising scholar lost!" I now say to myself again and with a far deeper feeling of regret, "It is a pity." You are unworthy of the responsibility of

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wealth and position if you only use it for the gratification of the passing whim. I make bold to prophesy that the "self" that you will find in your Keep will be scarcely worth the acquaintance; and that the work you will do there will be a negligible quantity. I have had, however, too long an intimacy with the ways of youthful humanity in the average to flatter myself that you will pay the least attention to these remarks. They are here set down, I repeat, merely as an act of conscience, *pour mémoire* and with no illusions.

'Though I may disapprove, my feelings towards you do not change. I think I am too old to change. When the next upheaval takes place in your mental affairs, when the moment comes that you want a sincere friend, you will know, as ever, where to find one.'

To this document there was a postscript. Ughtred smiled bitterly as he read it. John Gordon had a talent for speeding the Parthian arrow.

I note your mention of the purchase of a motor-car, and recognise its convenience when you are forced to visit your estates!

Ughtred's first act on his return home had, indeed, been to have the two habitable rooms of the Keep fitted up for his occupation. The fancy had haunted him from the first moment he had entered into that place of solitude and of antique memories; he had set himself with feverish energy to make it a reality. He had taken a good deal of trouble, and was perhaps scarcely aware how much æsthetic enjoyment he found in fitting out this eccentric dwelling in the most mediæval manner compatible with the necessary comfort.

His second proceeding of importance had been the purchase of a powerful motor-car and the hire of a clever and taciturn chauffeur. Not only did the new acquisition serve him for the purpose of lengthy drives along the wild coast roads, but, as he had written to John Gordon in his freak of seclusion, it made communication with the world not only possible but easy.

As for the care of his rooms and of his meals, he had arranged that such details should be attended to with the least infliction of common humanity upon his solitude. A couple of servants drove over from Honor Maxwell in the morning bringing provisions, discreetly performed their work, while their master roamed the cliffs or pored over his papers—and as discreetly disappeared.

With plenty of money to oil the wheels, it is wonderful how smoothly even so unpractical a caprice can be made to run.

And yet, in spite of the attainment of his desires, these uninterrupted hours of loneliness, when nothing alive, save sea-fowl and sheep, could come within the reach of his senses, brought no fruit of accomplishment. In spite of the romantic inspiration to be found in all the varying moods of skies—placid, sun-sparkling, grand in the sunset, ethereally lovely in the sunrise; or yet storm-tossed, ridden by vast armies of clouds—of seas languidly lapping and murmuring, fierce under white crests, spindrift and flying scud; or yet livid against the leaden rim of the horizon—in face of all these mighty stimulants his brain remained sterile. In the deep full-blossomed plenitude of the summer stillness his mind would wander away, in mere fatigue, upon the wings of the great voices about him. In the uproar of a tempest night he would sit and hearken to the 'thundering reef, the wild steeds pressing on,' to 'the sound of them trampling the wave'—all the old anger of the sea against the earth reverberating about him—and know within his soul a kindred anger, as purposeless. And always, in the grand and savage war-chant, in the passionate complaints of winds and waves, in the echoes of beaten shores, it was the music of the *Tourelle* which swirled about him—till the beat of it, the pressure, the haste and the torment seemed to get into his blood.

The manuscript of Plotinus remained unenriched by half a page of matter that could stand; his new choice edition of *Æschylus*, if pored over now and again, yielded nothing to the scholar; only disturbing stuff to the lover unacknowledged. His odes? At moments indeed (when the pressure upon his imagination of the stern glories of the storm, or the exquisite caress of sunshine upon these rugged surroundings, drove him to the throes and longings of expression) he felt himself drawn to his odes; but he was here ever withheld. For here the secret obsession of his thoughts inevitably betrayed him.

He had believed that 'to find himself' in his solitude would be as easy as to find his own countenance in the reflection of an untroubled pool. Despairingly, he sought for the old self—for the humble student, the proud celibate. What had become of that esteemed personality? It evaded him as the shadows on ruffled waters. He found, instead, forces that he had never

suspected, yearnings that he would not admit; hatreds, envies; languors and heats; states of soul, in fine, as variable as the seas and skies without. And always one memory dominating; one desire pressing; always one haunting.

'*C'est une mangeuse d'âmes,*' had said Vaucelin. There were moments, in his fruitless self-railing, when the young man fell back upon this phrase as the key to the mystery of his own state. Yet it was always with a sense of disloyalty, of desecration. 'She will rob you of your manhood. . . . A spiritual vampire. . . . One that takes all and gives nothing. . . .' Enough truth there was in these horrible words to taunt him on many a sleepless night, many a long, empty, morbid hour. Yet even if she were all that this brutal gossip painted her, he knew that he could not now conceive any future free of her. Were it only the memory of her he must cherish it.

In one of his rare returns to Honor Maxwell, after he had disheartedly transacted his necessary business—feeling as unsatisfied with himself as obviously were his ministers and retainers—he passed a desultory hour in the library, selecting certain books to bring back with him to his cell. He chanced upon a volume of Swinburne, a poet with whom hitherto in his chosen young Puritanism he had cared little to make other than perfunctory acquaintance. But a line or two arrested him. He read on. The rhythm caught him; rang like a wave, shouted in his head; seemed to lift him and carry him back, cradling his tormented fancy. It was all about man's passion for woman, and man's passion for the sea. He told himself, parleying with his conscience, that he must study further; that because of its grand sea-music he must take the book away with him: it would fit with his environment—that no one had marked the Greek measure more subtly than this too fleshly singer.

But, back at the Keep, an hour of moonlight, warring exquisitely with the yellow gleam of his shaded lamp upon the walls of his stone chamber; an hour when the long languorous pulse of the high tide was felt against the cliffs, and when an air of southern tenderness, savoured with the pungency of the ocean, touched his lips with salt—found him weak and brought him nearer truth.

The open book on his knee, he pondered and read, and pondered again; and knew that the words were sweet and subtle like an opiate in his blood: knew that they voiced his own passion.

Yea, I know this well : were you once sealed mine,
Mine in the blood's heat, mine in the breath,
Mixed into me as honey in wine
Not time that sayeth and gainsayeth
Nor all strong things had severed us then.

The blue shaft of moonlight shifted and faded from his walls, and still he sat by his shaded lamp in a kind of waking dream. The hour, the song, his very solitude undid him. For the first time he surrendered himself, and found joy in the yielding, though it was but to the fantastic emptiness of a dream.

To have her here—here, sitting alone with him and the night! *In der Nacht!*

He woke next morning, ashamed and disturbed, as if he had committed a deed of wrong. He felt, as it were, a stain on his soul. The gay morning thunders of the rising tide, the slap of the waves and their laughing withdrawal, the dancing freshness of the morning breeze : everything of the outer world smote upon his senses with the pain of contrast. He left his couch with a kind of horror for the fevered confusion of his dreams, and ran down the steep pathway to fling himself into the sea, with more than a physical yearning for its laving and bitter waters. And all the while, as he swam and plunged, and let the breakers beat upon him, and trod the strong supporting element with the sunshine radiance already warm about him, the lilt of last night's song of passion ran in his head like an evil melody.

In his fancy it clung to him, as once the most slime taint in the air of Overbecq.

He prolonged his swim to exhaustion ; came out of the water chilled, and mounted to his crag with leaden feet. There he found that his servants had already accomplished their daily task and left the Tower to its loneliness.

Two letters awaited him. John Gordon's hand he recognised ; but the other bore an unknown writing. His heart stood still as he looked at it, for it had a Belgian stamp.

He took up his friend's missive determinedly first. Coming at this particular moment of depression, his old friend's stern words could bring out a sterile resentment : ' Kicking a man when he's down never helped the weak to rise,' he thought.

Every innuendo stung. Every condemning phrase struck home. But sting and blow drove his thoughts down hill. He

was good for nothing, then? So be it—he was a fool, a failure! The self that he would now find would not be worth the acquaintance; it was all true, no doubt. Well, what did it matter? He was young, he was rich, he had his life to enjoy, he would not be so foolish as to fail also in that!

He now caught up the other letter and tore it open. It began, in French :

DEAR SIR,—Do you always do things in such a hurry? We are such slow, sleepy people here at Overbecq that we are still making great eyes of astonishment at your sudden departure. But we hope that you do not forget as quickly; that friendship itself has not passed away from you with the taste for the house of your friends. Friendship! a good friendship, to me there is nothing so desirable on this earth. It is what I have wanted all my life. Have I ever found it? I don't know: I fear not. *Hélas!* But I still hope. How do you do? And what do you do? I wonder. We think of you; we talk much of you. Blueberry is cozened and coaxed: we hold you a little through Blueberry. And when I think of you, I think as of a young brother. Being so much older than you—older in years, so infinitely older through my womanhood, you will tolerate this familiarity. I wish I had had a brother; sometimes I feel so unutterably lonely—so lonely of soul, I mean: are you not also lonely of soul? I believe it.

Figure to yourself, my husband has discovered that he cannot let another summer pass without shooting the grouse upon the moors over near you, and Vaucelin admits that he is longing for the English breezes. So we are beginning to think that we shall go back to Crossforth. Everyone is pleased with the idea—and not the least Annibal, who finds the neighbourhood of Kleenebecq insupportable. There are now two in that house to get on his nerves.

And I? Oh, I long to be away. It is insupportable to me too. Do you remember that letter you posted for me? It was no use. There are inconceivable people in this world.

You see I treat you as a friend still—you must do the same with us, with me. If you want no more of Crossforth House than you did of Overbecq, I for one will understand. Perhaps you will be right. Perhaps for a lonely soul, loneliness is best. And yet—and yet! Out of our two lonelinesses. . . . But I am an incorrigible idealist: life has well proved it to me.

Good-bye. We move slowly, as I told you—I do not know when it will be *au revoir*: indeed it is for you to decide if it is to be ever *au revoir* again. But, whether or no, believe me always in friendship, yours

AGLAE DE BRAYE.

There was a postscript here also :

When I think of you, it is as of some poet, some athlete of your beloved Greece—apart, crowned with wild thyme, the savage fragrance of it about you; disdainful of humanity, serving but one shrine—that of Artemis. Is not that you, a little? Perhaps in that old Greece I was your sister, and we two served her. Why was I ever re-born?

As Ughtred read, it was as if a hand had been laid upon the agitation of his soul, on the unworthy turmoil of his senses, and had brought peace. Peace and a great clarity seemed to spread over his mind. The sensation was exquisite after the troubled weeks.

He sank down on the oak bench behind him and slowly re-read the letter, pausing upon particular phrases of illumination and comfort. Thus delicately, serenely, she set herself right before his eyes; and by so doing put him right before himself!

Now all was clear; now he knew, and he could give himself to the thought of her without a single harassing or humiliating suspicion. She was his friend, his sister soul—the rest had been but a fever-dream.

With delight he breathed in the fragrance of violet that hung about the paper. It brought her presence vividly to him, that presence in which he could now bask in unpunished ecstasy, knowing that to such friendship all must be, of its essence, pure. Oh, how well he understood! Yonder delicate soul, 'lonely as his own,' had been vainly striving for a worthy companionship—perpetually thrown back, perpetually deceived through the sheer materialism of those whom she had sought to find as high-soaring as herself. Antoine, Stanislas. She had spoken to them in the language of the spirit. Through the voice of the music she loved she had appealed to some ethereal kinship, and they had answered with the coarse cry of the brute! Even he! As if the serene stealing light were falling on the dark places of his own nature, he saw his odious fault, and the trouble that had been consequent upon him. Ah, right had she been to rise from him in anger that night; to measure him, on the last morning, with such subtly disdainful indifference!

Yet, with what divine intuition did she still hope in him, had she thus graciously forgiven! It was right that she should do so. He was worthy of this renewed trust, and he would prove it. He recognised in himself the answering soul, the power to rise with her to those heights where they might meet.

He took up John Gordon's letter again, and re-read it with a different impression. He had even a smile for the Socratic roughness of tongue. The dear old master was right too, in so far that the mood which had led his scholar to idle seclusion had been a barren one, to say the least of it. But it

would be shaken off now; John Gordon would be shown where he had been wrong.

With two such friendships, what might not yet be accomplished! He would prove himself worthy of the old trust, of the new one.

He gazed round his strange dwelling-place almost regretfully. He had filled his solitude with an empty clamour of heart, yet it was dear to him. He must leave it—he knew that—and take up his life again in its fullness. How simplified his projects under this new light; how straight his road! And how manfully he intended to tread it! Some day it would be sweet to bring her here, and she would understand.

His eye, roaming the singular room with its mixture of luxury and rudeness, fell on the volume of Swinburne. His hand hovered for a second over it: he was half tempted to fling it through the deep narrow slit of window that overlooked the sea—sheer depth into the water below. But he thrust back the suggestion instantly. Let it stay there; it was beautiful and Greek and full of the splendid breath of the ocean, even if mingled with too much perfume from Aphrodite's musk-roses. Could they not both afford to pick up the beauty and neglect the over-luscious taint?

Then he sat down and wrote the answers to his letters; both extremely brief, yet pregnant.

DEAR JOHN GORDON,—I am going back to Honor Maxwell and hope to take up work again. Work! After all I have found myself.

Yours,—U.M.

The other was still shorter:

Did you perhaps come into this world again to find your brother? *Au revoir*, dear friend—dear soul!

The last two words he wrote in Greek. He had the certainty that she would find the way to their meaning. As he folded this last document the smile returned to his lips. He had needed a John Gordon at his elbow to point out the ineffable egoism of his answer to her. But he had so long been the centre of interest to himself, every passing thought and feeling had been of such importance, that he was quite unconscious of it.

Violet-crowned, shining! His friend, his soul!

All the springs of energy, so long paralysed, leaped again into

activity within him. His brain began to teem with inspiration; the swelling desire to express himself, to create, possessed him with a tumult of the senses—a permitted and holy tumult, since its origin was all spiritual. He turned to that high mediæval desk that had borne the tortures of his arid strivings on so many wasted hours. With the Greek lilt and the catching rhythm of Swinburne's ode still haunting his memory, the words appeared to run from him with the warmth and the swiftness of fire:

'To my Friend—To my Soul,' he headed the poem. It was the first he had ever written, that was not a transcription of some older inspiration.

CHAPTER II.

SERENE SKIES.

It was a hot summer, and August waned in a golden glow. Never had the lands of Honor Maxwell looked more typically English in their beauty than on the day when the party from Crossforth paid their first visit thither, shortly after the unexpected return from Overbecq.

As the Comtesse had foreshadowed in her letter, M. Vaucelin was with them. Ughtred could have excused the gentleman's presence; but in his happy frame of mind—he had remained in what can best be described as a state of exalted serenity—he was able to tolerate so immaterial a disturbance.

And indeed the Frenchman, whether repenting himself of having exceeded prudence during his discourse in the poplar avenue, or whether labouring under the fond belief that he had successfully warded off all danger to his young and interesting acquaintance, seemed to be satisfied to enjoy himself without bearing the burden of his neighbour's concern.

'My faith! you are a lucky youth!' he repeated at varying intervals, as, strolling round the place between Ughtred and the Comte, when some fresh aspect of house, garden or distant view would present itself to his eye. . . . 'An heritage that falls into your mouth like a ripe fruit, without your having had the trouble to expect it!'

'Hein! what did I tell you?' Annibal would reply each time, with a proprietary air.

Ughtred was able even to survey with equanimity the interchange of glances between the two men, and their sidelong look at Solange. He could afford to smile at such absurdities from the height of his present ethereal soul-plane. And presently the blissful moment came when he found himself at last alone again with the Comtesse Aglaé. It was Annibal himself who gave him the opportunity by bearing off Vaucelin to see the horses: the stable-yard was the spot towards which the big man inevitably gravitated in every country house.

Solange had lingered awhile in the library with the other two, who were turning over books in quiet and amicable converse; then with one of her sudden impetuosities, crying out, 'I like things alive, I . . . !' had flung herself from the room. Something of the old animosity had shot from her eyes in a last look over her shoulder.

Glancing up from the heavy volume that lay open on her knee, as she sat under the slanting light in a window recess, Aglaé de Braye smiled indulgently at Ughtred.

'*Cette jeunesse . . . !*' she said. Then she let her glance roam out upon the sunlit terrace. 'My niece and your late cousin Basil used to be what that poor young man called "great chums,"' she proceeded, reflectively. 'In fact, Annibal regarded him as a probable nephew-in-law.'

Ughtred dropped the volume he had just carefully selected.

'What!' he exclaimed, 'Basil also! But then every marriageable youth. . . .' He broke off, picked up the book: 'I beg your pardon,' he proceeded stammeringly; 'it seemed, somehow, rather absurd.'

She averted her glance from his crimson face.

'Yes. I know it seems absurd. Annibal is always match-making for that child. . . . It began years ago, though she is still so much too young to think of marriage. But—' she paused, with a little sigh.

'It must make it awkward for her, sometimes,' said Ughtred sarcastically.

'Yes,' she conceded.

'And for . . . ' he hesitated, 'sometimes for the other side too.'

'Ah, but we must pass it to him, my friend. It has been such a sorrow!' she breathed. Then still with downcast eyes she went on: 'Poor Annibal, it is his one dream to see Solange

with children about her: she is the last of his line. You understand. It is such sorrow that he has none of his own.'

Her eyelids quivered. Ughtred stood silent. He had a sudden realisation of the gulf that separated him from this woman's life. Kindred souls they might be; but the tragedy of her material existence was something inevitably apart, which his thoughts must not even touch. And, even while he felt the impassable division between his humanity and hers, the air with which she had made this reference, its intangible betrayal of long-endured grief, stirred in him a new sentiment towards her—a tenderness, a longing to comfort. Yet again, of this he might speak no word.

He remembered Count Annibal's brutal frankness upon the same subject. How she must have been humiliated! Now even across this misery her delicate soul could fling a web, softening, veiling. 'We must pass him this—it had been such a sorrow!' . . . The sweetness, the sadness of her intonation lingered in his ear.

She closed the book she had been holding, and ran her finger over the tooling of the antique leather.

'How beautiful,' she said absently. Then, with a deliberate lightness:

'When the time comes,' she said, 'I shall marry Solange to someone of my own choice. It will be quite easy. She must have a good fellow, who likes sport, and who will be proud of her strength and courage. He need never be an eagle. Stanislas'—here she lifted her eyes—'Stanislas certainly would never have done!' A whimsical smile tilted her lips. 'You know, my friend,' she said ruefully, 'that letter you posted—well, it was no use at all. Stanislas is frankly impossible! I was driven away from Overbecq. . . . Oh, how glad I am to be here again!'

The young man hesitated upon speech; and still was silent. My friend! It was an extraordinary pleasure to him to hear that title fall upon him from her lips, meaning what it did now. Mingled with this pleasure, and with the content that her tone of open confidence gave him, was the anger roused by the audacity of Stanislas de Braye-Flesselle.

He would like to have spoken these feelings, but timidity still held him. She seemed to find no fault with his speechlessness; rather her glance caressed him, as if it became him. And

indeed she might have been answering his thoughts when, with a sudden gracious movement, she put out her hand to him and said :

‘So it is understood between us, is it not, my Greek brother?’

He took her hand reverently, his heart leaped to his lips :

‘Sister! . . . shining, violet-crowned!’ Then he added, in the Greek, the words with which he had concluded his letter.

‘I like that,’ she answered, drawing her hand away, after a pressure. ‘That is what I want to be to you—your inspiration. I am of so little use to anyone in the world,’ she proceeded, qualifying, with her subtle tact, what might have sounded too closely personal, ‘that, to be a help to the scholar, an inspiration to the poet. . . . Oh, I cannot flatter myself that in either way it would amount to much; but even a little sympathy helps, does it not, in a lonely, busy world?’

At that, greatly daring, he laid his ode upon her lap. He had carried it about him against this moment—a moment which however he hardly anticipated would have come to him with such ease.

With flushing cheek, he watched while she read, ponderingly, as a man would have his poetry considered. Then she sought his glance and, for the first time since he had known her, he saw her pale face colour.

‘I am glad,’ she said.

No more. He could not have imagined dearer praise.

‘If you find something of the wild thyme in it—’ he faltered.

‘Ah,’ she echoed, ‘the wild thyme! A little wild, very independent, haunting . . . yes, the thyme is in it—my friend!’

‘Come a little closer to me,’ she went on. ‘I have something to show you, now that we talk of wild thyme.’

He knelt beside her, as before in the turret-room, but now in what freedom of spirit! If he were to meet Count Annibal’s gaze upon them, he would not move an inch. His pulses beat quicker, however, as he saw her lift the locket to his view.

‘When you wanted to open that, I called you mad,’ she went on. ‘It was a mistake. But you, too, made a mistake, sir, because confidence must only give itself when it chooses. Now I choose that my friend should have my confidence.’

She laid the locket, opened, on his ode. He saw an empty silk-lined case, on either side covered with glass. He looked to read the riddle in her face. Still she was smiling, but her eyes were far away. She brought them back to him; he thought, with a little effort.

'Yes, the dried sprig was there, which you held in what I thought was a dead hand. Yes, it is true, it meant much to me to find you alive, and I kept the little memento: you knocked it out of its *cachette* that evening in the Tourelle. You will have to give me another. We women are so sentimental! But what does not an elder sister feel when she has seen her brother's fair head lie as if in the sleep from which there is no waking, and then has the joy of seeing life return? How you look at me! Yes, the locket has its little secrets. I will admit you into one of them.'

Her slender fingers manipulated; and then she showed it to him again. The locket was not empty as he had deemed; on one side, the glass with its silk lining, set open on its hinge disclosed a photograph.

'Antoine!' cried he involuntarily, and felt the blood throb in his head.

'Yes,' she said, without seeming surprised. 'Antoine.' She snapped the little wing back into place. 'Poor boy—*il est mort. Il m'a trop aimé*. Too much, too much!' she repeated with a sad emphasis. 'It was all unhappy; it could end in no good way—yet, when he was dead, I was sorry. And, if the dead know anything, I think it makes him happier that I should carry his picture, always. Since he is dead, I can do that.' She turned with a little abrupt movement towards him. 'And now you know of me. But how did you know of Antoine?'

He was troubled. What could he answer? It was not her way to push home an embarrassing question.

'Well, at least, now you understand,' she resumed. The something angry, almost a shade fierce, had gone out of her voice; it had its soft note of indulgence again.

'Now I know,' he repeated vaguely. 'Now I understand.' And then as her fingers closed about the jewel—'The other side—has it a secret too?'

The spring clicked.

'Yes,' she answered him, and dropped the trinket from his

sight. 'Something for no other eyes but my own.' Her air was final. Oddly enough, whatever this relic might be, all his disquietude was still concentrated round the mystery of the dead Antoine. She now took up his poem, folded it: 'This is mine. I keep it?'

And in the rush of gratification Ughtred lost the uneasy stirrings that had thus unduly awakened once again in his perfect peace. Exulting, he watched her thrust the sheet under the folds of her bodice.

She rose, and, with a laugh to find himself still on his knees, he followed her example.

'You like the verses, then?' He could not resist the boyish impulse to whisper.

'You will write more,' she answered elusively. 'And you will bring it all to me. And one day, there will be a book . . . between us. Where did you write them—here?'

She swept the dim rich room with thoughtful eyes. He shook his head.

'No. Guess.' He felt wonderfully light-hearted, wonderfully at ease.

'No,' she said after him. She looked past him, out of the window. 'It is too still here. There is the sound of the sea in them.'

'Ah!' he flashed, enraptured. 'You have found it! Yes, it was at the Tower, at my old Keep. The sound of the sea got into them; and something else too.'

Her lips parted; she had caught his meaning before he could formulate it.

'*In der Nacht!*' she said happily.

'Oh, you must come to my Tower, and hear the waters play it to you—my music!'

Steps and voices were heard approaching on the terrace without. He wondered if that was why the answer to his outcry was all at once so conventionally amiable.

'Please, yes—let us come to your ruins. It would be quite interesting!'

By this time Vaucelin was looking in upon them, inquisitively, through the open casement. She called to him:

'Sir Ughtred invites us to his dungeon on the coast. Beautiful ruins to interest you, my antiquarian friend. What shall it be?' she asked the young man over her shoulder. 'A

gipsy tea? That will be charming. I will make tea for you. While the child there climbs the rocks like a chamois, you, Vaucelin, will scratch at the stones. And Annibal—what shall my Annibal do? *Ma foi*, I can think of nothing but a big cigar. But we shall all be happy in our own way. Let it be soon, while this sun shines.'

Never had he seen her in so gracious a mood of gaiety; it charmed him out of his disappointment, his boyish inclination to sulk. After all, friendship should be, of its essence, a patient thing. By and by, when the dear tie waxed naturally closer and more intimate, he could have his dream of her, alone—alone together at the Tower! She was wise, no doubt, to let people grow accustomed to see for themselves first the perfect comradeship of their relations. So he smiled back at the smiling faces. It was a good thing that all should be so content, this day of their first visit to Honor Maxwell. Even Solange, hanging on her uncle's arm, had a girlish air of pleasure at the thought of the expedition. As for the Comte, he was chuckling in his beard:

'Amen to the big cigar!'

It was wonderful how serene were the skies.

CHAPTER III.

A SCRAMBLING EPISODE.

THE gipsy tea picnic proved a conspicuous success. Solange had insisted on having the repast *al fresco*, despising elaborate preparations in the living-room of the Keep—so the tea was smoked, the flies got into the cream, and a capricious wind blew the corners of the table-cloth perpetually across the plates. But Ughtred could not perceive any failure in his banquet: as he sat beside Aglaé on the short, dry turf outside his ruins, she had shown him, by an almost imperceptible gesture, a little plot of wild thyme between them.

'That makes it perfect,' she had said to him in an undertone.

It made it perfect for him too. It was a wonderfully fair day, with just that breeze which the sea gives to the land, even in the stillest inland hour. The sky was a vault of sapphire blue, melting down to the azure of the waters where sparkle and

shadow perpetually counterchanged in dazzling shimmer. His ruins showed perhaps the prouder and sterner in the sunshine than when set off by their more usual background of cloud and storm. Vaucelin's courteous and voluble tongue was still clacking with the enthusiasm which the impression had provoked. Comte Annibal, familiar with the sight, had once again his complacent air of vicarious proprietorship. Comtesse Aglaé uttered never a word as she stepped down from the sun-glare into the cool depth of the stone vault; but she had looked at Ughtred and made a little affirmative movement of the head, which seemed to say:

'Even such had I pictured it!'

As for Solange, the owner of the Tower had little thought for her. At first her presence had struck him once more as aggressive. She had pestered him with questions, intruded her personality when all his desire was to feel in silence the sympathetic thoughts of his friend going out to him. He answered her civilly, absently; and by and by not at all—at which she took natural umbrage and fell into sullen dumbness, her eyes moving with a hard watchfulness from his countenance to that of her aunt. A little while ago this would have disturbed him; now he could afford to ignore Solange and her ill-bred school-girl manners.

Annibal was in as genial a mood as that basking giant, the ocean, two hundred feet below them. After tea he lit his Havana.

'Do not occupy yourselves with me, my children,' he said. 'I am going to yield myself to meditation.' There was a conscious twinkle of humour in his eyes. He rose, stretched himself lazily and walked away to a cosy nook, where he lay down with much deliberation, his head in the shadow of a rock, the rest of his huge body in full sunshine.

Vaucelin professed himself eager to return to a closer study of the ruins, and, with transparent artifice, craved for the Comtesse's company.

'I know it interests you, like me, this ancient architecture.'

'*Mon Dieu*,' said his hostess, sweetly, 'I feel disposed like Annibal, friend Vaucelin. I will meditate upon it from a distance.'

But Solange, scarlet in the face, sprang to her feet, knocking over an empty cup with a clatter.

'For me, I am going to climb, and I demand no companionship!' she cried. Then apostrophising her aunt, she broke volubly into their own language. 'That's what's expected of me, is it not—that I should climb? The little girl! She must run away and amuse herself!'

In a whirlwind of unexpected temper she swung round and fled up towards the Keep before the others had recovered from the shock of the attack.

'Good heavens!' said Aglaé, with a laugh; 'how can one consider it otherwise than as a child! But it has not changed since it was four years old and used to stamp, threatening the universe with its little fierce fistlets. *Vous en souvient-il, mon bon Vaucelin?*' And then, with a sudden change of tone: 'But, behold her, climbing indeed! In mercy's sake, Vaucelin, go after her—she may pay some attention to you—or she will be breaking her neck.'

With her slight, ungloved hand she was tearing little sprigs of thyme from the plant beside her. There was a mocking gaiety in her smile. Ughtred had never seen her in this mood, so young, so human; the distance separating them seemed all at once annihilated. But M. Vaucelin, surveying her for a moment without speaking, had a glance that was nothing if not inimical. His trim countenance, as a rule all urbanity, was wrinkled by a laugh, sarcastic and malicious. His words, however, betrayed none of his feelings, they were merely rueful:

'And do you think my figure so adapted to chamois hunting?'

She answered his look rather than his remark.

'Heavens! how grumpy you are! Well, then, there's nothing for it'—she turned to Ughtred. 'You will have to do the climbing, my friend. And I, who thought we could give ourselves a little *tête-à-tête* for pleasant converse!'

Bunching the sprigs of thyme into a tiny ball of fragrance, she thrust it into her belt; then, stretching herself, indolently held out her hands to either man to help her to rise. The simplicity of her manner robbed it of coquettishness.

'Go, then, to your old stones,' she went on teasingly to the Frenchman. 'Sir Ughtred will spread his wings and go and play Guardian Angel on the precipice's edge to our naughty child—and as for me, I am going to enjoy the view.'

All three walked in silence a little way towards the Keep, Ughtred by no means content with the task laid upon him.

'The wind is freshening,' said Vaucelin amicably.

'If you will allow me,' said Ughtred, ignoring him to address the Comtesse, 'I will show you a seat, on the path down to the sea, from whence there is a splendid view. And then I will join you there with Mademoiselle de Flodore—if I can persuade her to accompany me,' he added formally.

'Here we part then,' said their companion, still ingratiatingly.

'I am drawn to that wonderful old dungeon of yours. That ancient stone seat with the rude carving—unique!'

'*C'est ça!* Excellent!' said the Comtesse, airily.

They parted, and Ughtred, heaving a sigh of satisfaction, conducted her down the steep path which led, zigzagging precipitously between the rocks, to the strand. The wind was indeed freshening, and the rollers far below them wore furling white crests as they thundered into the creek. The muffled drumming of their dash against the walls of the hidden caverns that undermined the cliffs resounded at rhythmic intervals between the regular wash and roar of the surge.

They turned a sharp corner between barriers of rock, and then the full sweep of the waters burst upon their view, blinding in the sun blaze beyond the irregular shadows of the advancing cliffs; feasts of translucent colours garlanded with foam wreaths in perpetual evanescence. The spray leaped from shade into light, glittered a moment, a diamond shower, and fell again, snow.

The wind blew up the cliff charged with the sea tang, salt and stimulating and bitter. Aglaé's nostrils dilated and quivered.

'Ah! how good it is!' she murmured.

'And here is your throne,' said Ughtred, pointing to an advanced slab of rock.

She sat down and he beside her—forgetting all about Solange and her safety. Claspings her knees between interlaced fingers, she gazed out seaward, braving the fierce glitter with contracted eyelids.

'Life is good . . . sometimes!' she said, without turning her head.

He stretched himself towards her, half lying, his elbow on the rock, his chin in his hand, and saw the delicate line of her

profile drawn against the blue; the scent of crushed thyme at her waist mingled in his nostrils with the free breath of the sea. It was perhaps the one moment of his life when he was utterly content; he asked no more of it than what it now gave. His eyes were filled with her; hers by the sea.

A shout startled them; both turned to see the stout figure of Vaucelin blocking the gap in the narrow rockway just above them.

'*Eh là, eh là!* Look!' he was crying in French. As they looked, his voice suddenly failed—but a tragic gesture of the arm supplemented speech. He pointed violently.

'*Dieu du Ciel!*' exclaimed Aglaé, and covered her eyes with her hand. It was only then that Ughtred, manlike, slower of perception, stared upwards in his turn.

High above them rose the sheer wall of cliff upon which the Tower stood. Eaten away by centuries of weather, the lip of it jutted out, over-arching the deeps; and the ruins of the once mighty walls, welded into the crag, culminated in a broken angle that seemed to tremble upon a plunge into the abyss.

With horror Ughtred saw the figure of Solange poised upon the uttermost stone, arms outspread, like a bird about to take flight. The bare head, slightly inclined forward, flamed in the sunshine. The wind, driving fiercely in the free heights, moulded the flying skirts against the young limbs, and fluttered them wildly behind her.

For one dread-filled moment he thought she was about to leap, and remained still, paralysed, staring. Then he saw her turn, look down upon them, and wave her arm triumphantly upwards; heard her give a great cry, which was carried away, torn, as it were, from his hearing by the rush of the wind. But, before the sense of relief had time to reach his brain, his pulses were frozen again—for of a sudden she wavered, flung out her hands; a cry came from her again, this time feeble, like a child's wail.

'*Au secours!*' He divined the words. They were echoed by Vaucelin in strangled tones of anguish.

'*Sauvons la!*'

Ughtred's brain suddenly revived to vivid activity. He turned and sprang up the rocky path, darting by Vaucelin's labouring figure, and sped by his inept urgings. At the turn of the way he knew where a jutting of the rock might afford

the means of a desperate upward leap; where, a footing once gained, there was the possibility of a scramble to the top by a short cut—a possibility which in calmer moments he would not even have contemplated. But instant necessity is a mighty spur; and rock-climbing had not been a favourite sport of his in vain.

He leaped and gripped, swung himself upwards, crawled and reached and swung again. In more than one place nothing but the strength of his fingers supported him over the abyss. But always the vision of the swaying figure drawn against the huge emptiness of the sky, hovering over the void, poised between life and death, wavering indeed towards death, drove him by a need greater than his peril. He reached the crest—the last effort perhaps the most strenuous of all, since the ledge that supported the ruins jutted over on that very side.

He stood firm at last, straightened himself and looked; and for the first time felt the beating of his heart shake him and send confusion before his eyes. The thought awoke in him that if the figure were no longer visible, he would not have the strength to maintain his own balance. But there she stood, unexpectedly close to him, still on the verge, still poised, still wavering! The sight of her came to him in profile, all blown by the wind. She seemed to be inclining ever more forward, as if the gulf drew her. He knew that death-spell; once it had taken him upon a Scawfell crag. He ran forward upon the rim of turf that bordered the foot of the wall. In cold blood he had scarcely ventured to crawl along it.

‘Lie down—gently!’ he cried out. ‘Close your eyes and lie down! Don’t be frightened. I am coming!’

He had reached the point where the Tower broke away into a ruined length of wall; and he was able to hoist himself upon this jagged parapet. The masonry was many feet thick and safer going than the slippery turf.

‘Lie down!’ he shouted again.

She staggered horribly, and covered her face with her hands. Even as he reached her, her knees seemed to give way, and he had but the time to catch her violently and drag her backwards. The abyss yawned on either side; in the madness of her panic she stiffened herself against him. He had to cast himself backwards, drawing her down with him, gripping her with his bleeding hands.

'Lie still!' he commanded savagely.

She lay then quite still, held across him. By the heaving of her breast he knew that she had not fainted. Her loosened hair was against his cheek.

Close they lay, like effigies on a tomb, with the blue vault for canopy. And now his own head swam as he looked into its infinite depths. All at once it seemed to him as if time had ceased since they were stretched there on the height, her weight upon him. A shudder running through her called back his wandering mind.

'Try to turn gently round,' he said soothingly into space; 'turn so that you do not look at the sky. That brings on the vertigo as much as looking down. Don't be afraid. I am holding you, and we shall be all right now.' He hardly dared relax his grip, even as, obediently, she shifted herself. Then he felt her face against his shoulder and the young curve of her breast pressed against him.

A little while he left her thus, although all at once that burden of youthful life upon him seemed to be weighing down his own. His breath came short, the sweat broke on his forehead. Never had so many thoughts warred within his brain, so many visions crowded upon him.

When the shuddering terror in her frame had ceased and it seemed by her calmer breathing that some measure of self-control had returned to her, he spoke again:

'Can you bear to sit up? That's right. No—don't look about—don't look at anything but me. No—don't be afraid, you see I am holding you. I will not let go. Only let me move backwards. Now!' He steadily rose to his feet and lifted her up. 'A few paces,' he said slowly, moving one step at a time and pausing to draw her up to him. 'Keep looking at me,' he repeated.

Her eyes fixed on his face, the pupils wide with terror, she obeyed as one hypnotised. All at once he drew a long breath.

'Eureka!' he cried gaily, and set his foot on the platform of the broken inner stairs open to heaven. Only a few feet below them was a little grassy plot surrounded by a parapet of tumbled stones. He flung his arm round her waist, half carried her down the rude steps, and placed her sitting on the lowest. 'Now,' he said, looking down at her, and there was a ring of boyish triumph in his voice, 'you're safe! You're safe!'

Her eyes were still fixed upon him as if she could not withdraw them more. Between the tumbled masses of her hair her face was deathly white; her lips were parted, her nostrils strained wide as though the air of life were wanting to them. 'It's all right, you know,' he proceeded kindly, as he went down on one knee beside her and tried to take her cold inert hands; his were torn, burning and shaking. 'Come, you're not afraid now?'

At that moment she was but a frightened child to him. He spoke to her, looked at her, comforted her as he would a child. But she shrank from him, with a quick passionate movement infinitely surprising to him:

'Don't touch me!'

Though low spoken the words came with a concentration, an intensity of repudiation that struck him like a blow. Action and speech were far from childlike. He sprang to his feet, outraged. Once more she covered her face with her hands, and then was shaken by sobs that rent her more fiercely the more strenuously she fought against them.

He stared down at her, all his former resentment finding its way uppermost through the confusion of his thoughts. He saw, where the blouse sleeve fell away from her round white arms, the marks of his own fierce grip. Then he glanced at his own hands, torn and bruised, caked with earth and blood. . . . Truly they were not pretty enough to hold a lady. And they had hurt her. That was why, of course! . . . What poor things women are, most of them! What a thing this was, the most salient type of the sex!

He walked to the edge of the parapet, looked out vaguely at the sea vision, brushed his forehead with the despairing masculine gesture, and came back to look at her helplessly. She was still struggling with her tears.

'But we have to get back to them,' he expostulated. 'They are in a dreadful state about you, down there, you know——' He broke off, his countenance clearing: 'Hello, they're coming! Good old Vaucelin, he's found the way through the Keep!'

He ran across the little grassy platform, towards the spot where the broken stairway resumed its interrupted course.

'Safe!' he called down. 'Safe and sound!'

Vaucelin's heated countenance appeared against the sky between the jagged walls. He scrambled up, rushed from Ughtred to the girl and back again, waving an agitated arm.

Then without a word flung himself across the parapet and, making a funnel of his hands, yelled 'Saved!' till every stone and rock echoed to the cracked note.

Leaping down once more, he hurled himself upon Ughtred, kissed him on both cheeks before the latter could defend himself; and drawing a pocket handkerchief buried his face in its folds.

'Oh, good heavens!' exclaimed the young man, in poignant disgust, 'let us get away from this!'

Solange rose without a word. She dashed the tears from her face in a single gesture and flung up her head with that little soldier air of hers which was that of one challenging her own courage. There is nothing more styptic to a display of emotion than the sight of another's want of self-restraint.

But Ughtred, seeing her sway as she went, once more put his arm about her, to support her. He did it because he could do no less. It was with no good grace. The splendour of his success, the exaltation of danger vanquished in the grinning teeth of death, had fallen from him; he felt tired and bruised. The sounds of Vaucelin's gulps behind him as they slowly proceeded down the chaos of stone filled him with acute exasperation. And he hated this attitude of his, with his arms about Solange.

Aglaré was rarely a woman of many words; but that she was a creature acutely sensitive to emotion no one could live in her company an hour and doubt. It was her talent, however, to convey her feelings so subtly and so completely by a look, by a passing expression of her face, by her very silence, that the effect produced on others surpassed the eloquence of passion. It was as if you could hear her nerves vibrate in a single fluttering sigh, could see her soul suffer through the fugitive glance of shadowed eyes.

She met them in the inner enclosure where the stairway terminated in a round open space, giving through a still perfect archway upon the courtyard of the Keep. Here rough grass and sea-pink had forced their way between the flags, and in one corner a group of dwarf alders shivered, now white, now green, as the breeze shook them. Even some such shiver of pallor and flush passed over her face as she watched them approach. Ughtred cast one glance at her, dropped his supporting arm, and in two strides was beside her.

'She is quite unhurt, I assure you,' he said urgently.

Her eyes, very dark in the returning pallor, passed him quickly to rest upon the girl's figure, now paternally encircled by Vaucelin, who made no disguise of mopping his eyes with the free hand.

'She has blood on her dress,' Aglaé said, almost in a whisper.

'Madame,' Ughtred answered, 'it is only mine.' And he spread out convincingly his disfigured palms.

She had a little cry in her throat, as soft and pitiful as a crooning dove's; and the next instant her own white hands fluttered into his. She looked up at him. He was grimed, his hair was dishevelled, there was still the spirit of struggle about him.

'Oh,' she breathed rather than spoke, 'My friend!'

At this, all his angry vexation slipped from him. He knew that it had been worth while. Worth while, though Vaucelin continued to gasp and expound his own agony of mind and his own subsequent relief and lavished caresses and scoldings alternately upon the girl until it almost appeared as if the worthy gentleman persuaded himself that his had been the chief part in the drama. Worth while, in spite of the fit of sullenness in which Mademoiselle de Flodore continued to indulge, and the fact that she had never a look, let alone a look of gratitude, for her rescuer: despite too that, when he rejoined them, the Comte, from whom he might reasonably have expected recognition, showed himself unaccountably entertained.

They were all four assembled in the living-room of the Keep before he walked in upon them, unaware thus far of any misadventure. Vaucelin would not have been defrauded of the pleasure of pouring out the tale, even if the others had shown themselves in any wise anxious to forestall him. But the three had no such desire: silence held them each in a different way.

The speaker's own torments were volubly expounded; Solange's recklessness and danger luridly pictured.

'*Ah ça voyons!*' interrupted Annibal brusquely in French. 'What is it that you are recounting me there? I cannot make head or tail of it! Speak thou, *petite*.' His big voice filled the narrow stone room with a boom of sound; he caught the girl's chin, as she sat huddled on the skin-covered couch, and lifted it towards the sunset light. 'What larks have you been up to? Had a tumble; made your nose bleed?' His eye had fallen upon the brown and red stains on her white serge.

She shook her head.

'She climbed a little too high,' said Aglaé quietly, 'and could not get down again. So Sir Ughtred had to go after her and fetch her. To the uppermost point of the ruins—a ledge not fit for a mountain goat—she ventured in her rashness, unfortunate child! And then vertigo overcame her.'

'Ah, bah!' exclaimed her uncle. 'Giddy—thou?' He pinched her cheek and came over to Ughtred. 'And so you scrambled after my little Solange and brought her back safe? *Palsambleu!* And I was asleep!'

His laugh reverberated, flung back upon them by the stone walls.

Ughtred looked back at him with some astonishment. Was it to the Comte so jocular a thing? The broad, bearded face was one vast beam.

'Ah, you went after her!' the inveterate matchmaker was repeating. 'That's the way you go on while the old uncle is asleep!'

'I want to go home!' cried Solange angrily.

Aglaé and Ughtred had yet a few minutes to themselves while they walked slowly down the slippery hill to the road where the motors were waiting. Neither spoke for a little; then she said:

'When I saw her, up there, my heart stood still. And afterwards I saw you. . . .' She broke off. Glancing down at her he read on her face all she would not say. Then, suddenly, he thought he understood why she had made so little of the peril, spoken so slightly to her husband of the whole adventure. Of course! It was not that she had not known, not that she had not realised; it was for his sake; not to emphasise the absurdity of a situation solely created by the Comte's haunting thought—his *idée fixe*. With her superlative tact she had protected him from some protracted ridiculous scene.

'You will come to-morrow,' were her parting words.

He stood with his hat off, watching the motor glide away with them into the gathering twilight shadows, along the grey track of the down. Then he slowly retraced his steps towards the Keep, where he had arranged to pass the night: a freak of fancy he had permitted himself to indulge in once again, despite his new resolution. He wanted to give himself to memories of her after she had consecrated the place by her presence.

Yet, all through the evening, all through the night, maddeningly, it was another presence that possessed him.

Perpetually the thoughts that he would guide slipped from his control. The image of that figure poised between the two abysses of sky and sea had stamped itself upon his brain; the upright, triumphant figure on the very verge, with the draperies moulded close by the wind, with defiant head ablaze. Now it seemed agonisingly high above him, unattainable; now close, black against the sky, within a hand length, and yet dreadfully apart, wavering to death before he could clutch it. . . . Niké!

Of course he had known at once; it was Niké! The wind, the water, the height would inevitably have drawn her. And now it came to him oddly, by a fevered twist of his overstrained nerves, that it is in death the only great victory lies; that the real triumph of Niké must be the leap into eternity.

Again he felt her weight upon him, the heaving of her breast, her wild hair, wind-tossed, against his cheek; he saw her face in its deadly pallor; her eyes fixed on his, as if by that look alone she still clung to life; the open mouth, the panting nostrils. . . . The more resentfully he flung the vision from him, the more it obtruded itself, and the deeper grew his distaste.

Exhausted he sought his bed—only to go through the hateful moments with a vividly wakeful brain; to sleep perhaps ten minutes and feel himself swing over the emptiness, fall and start—or, worse still, to feel her fall, slip through his grasp and be swallowed up in nothingness. He would wake gasping; angrily turn over, and dream it all again. Once the torment changed: her weight was upon him, pressing the life out of him. And that was the worst of all.

Towards dawn the relief came upon him that the wonderful hour so often brings to man. He hardly knew if he were asleep or awake. But he felt himself wrapped round with a sense of soothing and rest. He thought without reasoning. Her presence is with me—she is thinking of me. My friend! . . . My soul! And suddenly to his bruised and smarting hands came the touch of her soft palms.

But even as that phantom touch came, a new whirl of sensation was upon him; his whole being thrilled in ecstasy: he knew that it was love.

(To be continued.)

THE MOST PRIMITIVE PEOPLE.¹

Four years ago the British Ornithologists' Union completed the fiftieth year of its age, and in order to celebrate the event the members of the Society and their friends raised a fund for the exploration of the unknown Snow Mountains of Dutch New Guinea. Though that island is the greatest in the world, it is so little known that the large majority (I think I may say) of people are ignorant of its whereabouts, and many even of the most intelligent of our friends were convinced of the fact that we were bound either for the region of Panama or for the West Coast of Africa. So it will not be impertinent to state briefly that New Guinea is an island lying immediately to the North of Australia, from which it is separated by the shallow waters of Torres Strait.

The western half of the island, which belongs to Holland, has been for various reasons, physical and climatic, left almost entirely unexplored. Nearly three hundred years ago the Dutch navigator, Jan Carstensz, in the course of a voyage for the discovery of Australia, saw from the coast 'a very high mountain range in many places white with snow, which we thought a very singular sight, being so near the line equinoctial.' It was indeed so singular a sight that for centuries nobody believed him, and to this day no man has set foot on those snows, though only three years ago a Dutch explorer, Mr. Lorentz, reached the snow on an isolated peak, Mount Wilhelmina, a hundred miles to the East.

It was to this mysterious range of Snow Mountains that the Society determined to send its expedition, of which I had the fortune to become a member, and although our furthest point was still many miles distant from the highest ranges, we passed through a great deal of hitherto unexplored country and made the acquaintance of some most interesting peoples, as will be evident (I hope) from the following extracts from notes and a journal.

¹ This paper forms part of a forthcoming work, entitled 'Pygmies and Papuans: the Stone Age To-day in New Guinea,' by A. F. R. Wollaston.

The expedition sailed from Java on Christmas Day 1909, and we passed by Macassar and Amboina to Dobo, in the Aru Islands, about a hundred miles south of New Guinea, where we finally took leave of civilisation.

When we left the northernmost end of the Aru Islands behind us the wind rose and torrents of rain descended, and the Arafura Sea, which is almost everywhere more or less shoal water, treated us to the first foul weather we had experienced since leaving England. At dawn on January 4 we found ourselves in sight of land, and about five miles south of the New Guinea coast. A big bluff mountain, a southern spur of the Charles Louis range, determined our position, and the head of the ship was immediately turned to the east. As we steamed along the coast the light grew stronger, and we saw in the far north-east pale clouds, which presently resolved themselves into ghostly-looking mountains one hundred miles away. Soon the rising sunlight touched them and we could clearly see white patches above the darker masses of rock, and then we knew that these were the Snow Mountains of New Guinea, which we had come so far to see. Beyond an impression of their remoteness and their extraordinary steepness we did not learn much of the formation of the mountains from that great distance, and they were quickly hidden from our view, as we afterwards found happened daily, by the dense white mists that rose from the intervening land.

Following the coast rather more closely, we soon found that our approach was causing some excitement on shore. White columns of the smoke of signal fires curled up from the low points of the land, and canoes manned by black figures paddled furiously in our wake, while others, warned doubtless by the signals, put off from the land ahead of us and endeavoured to intercept us in our course.

The shore was low and featureless, and it was impossible to identify the mouths of the rivers from the very inaccurate chart. It was not safe for the ship to approach the land closely on account of the shoal water, so the captain dropped anchor, when he had been steaming eastwards for about eight hours, and sent the steam-launch towards an inlet, where we could see huts, to gather information. A bar of sand prevented the launch from entering the inlet, so they hailed a canoe which ventured within speaking distance, and by repeating several

times 'Mimika,' the only word of their language that we knew at that time, learnt that we had overshot our destination by a few miles. That canoe, it should be noted, was remarkable on account of two of its crew. One of them held aloft an ancient Union Jack; the other was conspicuously different from the scores of men in the canoes about us, who were all frankly in a bare undress, by wearing an old white cotton jacket fastened by a brass button ornamented with the head of Queen Victoria. How the flag and the coat and the button came to that outlandish place will never be known, but it is certain that they must have passed through very many hands before they came there, for certainly no Englishman had ever been there before.

When the launch returned to the ship a crowd of natives, fifty or sixty at the least, came clambering on board, leaving only one or two men in each canoe to paddle after the steamer as we slowly returned towards the Mimika. A few of them shook hands, or rather, held hands, with us and talked loudly and volubly, while the rest stared dumbly at us and then wandered aimlessly about the ship seeking a chance to steal any loose piece of metal. They showed no fear, nor did they betray any excitement nor any very keen curiosity about the marvellous things that they were seeing for the first time. They were quite unmoved by the spectacle of the windlass lifting up the anchor, and a casual glance down the skylight of the engine-room was enough for most of them. They appeared to take everything for granted without question, and a stolid stare was their only recognition of the wonderful works of the white man's civilisation. In one respect, it is true, they were not quite so apathetic, and that was in their appetite for tobacco, which they begged from everyone on board. When they had obtained a supply, they sat in groups about the deck and smoked as unconcernedly as though a passage in a steamship were an affair of everyday occurrence in their lives.

In a few days we landed all our stores and men and established a base-camp on the Mimika River, a few miles from the sea, near the native village of Wakatimi. At that time when the ground was being cleared we began to be plagued by large blue-bottle flies, which swarmed about the camp and laid their eggs everywhere. One of their favourite laying-grounds was in our bedding, which in a hot damp climate must always be hung out to air when the sun shines. You would find two folds

of your blanket stuck together with horrible masses of eggs, and if, as sometimes happened, you did not scrape them all away, you would wake up at night and find yourself crawling with maggots. At the same time, and indeed during the whole of our stay in the country, we were greatly annoyed by the depredations of very large crickets. Not content with making a most distracting noise by night, these horrible creatures did endless damage to our eatable possessions. They invaded the sacks in which we kept our scanty garments—socks, vests, and the like—and riddled them into holes, and they appeared to have a special partiality for sponges and brushes, which they devoured completely. Even more serious were their attacks on folded tents or sacks of rice and flour, which had to be constantly taken out of the storehouses and repaired. When these things were taken out of the house a large number of crickets were taken out too, and then was the chance for the kingfishers, which darted down and snapped them up. A pair of these beautiful little birds haunted the camp, and became so tame that they would fly down from the roof of a house and pick up a cricket within a foot or two of a man.

When the base-camp had been properly established, we devoted most of our energies to transporting stores by canoe up the Mimika River to another camp near the village of Parima, beyond which the river was no longer navigable. The distance from Wakatimi to Parima, though it was only twenty-two miles as the crow flies, was about forty miles by water, and it took from five to seven days, according to the state of the river, to accomplish the journey in canoes.

Those days of canoeing up the Mimika River were some of the most monotonous of my life and I shall never forget them. For the first few miles above Wakatimi the river is about as wide as the Thames at Windsor; the banks are covered with smallish trees, with here and there clumps of palm-trees, from which fresh young coconuts may be gathered. Occasionally the rising tide helps you on your way, and if you are particularly fortunate you may even see at the end of a straight reach of the river a glimpse of the distant mountains. But very soon the river narrows to half its width, the huge trees of the regular New Guinea jungle shut out all except a narrow strip of sky, and the river twists and meanders towards all the points of the compass, until you wonder whether it will not eventually bring you back to the point whence you started.

The rate of travel varied with the efficiency of the coolies and according to the strength of the current in the river, which was sometimes very sluggish, and at other times came swirling down at three or four miles an hour. We cleared camping-places at various points along the river, and, if the pace was good, the average stage was about six hours, though it often took ten or even twelve hours when the river was in flood. The pleasantest camping-places were on mud-banks, where the coolies could bathe and pitch their tents without trouble; but they were very liable to be flooded by a sudden rise of the river during the night, and we generally had our own tents pitched on a space cleared in the jungle at the top of a steep bank.

It will be convenient to describe a day's voyage up the Mimika by taking an extract from my diary:—

May 13. The monotony of the river is beyond words, and one day is almost exactly like another. I get up at six o'clock and breakfast off cocoa and biscuits and butter, whilst the camp is coming down, *i.e.* tents, &c., being packed. Spend the next hour or rather more in hurrying on the coolies with their food, which they ought always to begin to cook half an hour earlier than they do. See everything put into the canoes and then start with the last. After that anything from five to twelve hours' sitting on a damp tent with one's feet in more or less (according to the weather) water swishing from side to side of the canoe. Sometimes I paddle, but not so much now as I did the first time I came up the river, not from laziness but because the irregular time is so horribly irritating. If the coolies would only paddle lazily but regularly all would be well, but they will not; they paddle all together furiously for perhaps twenty or thirty strokes, and then vary between a haphazard rag-time and doing nothing at all.

Most of the time I watch the banks go by and wonder how long it will take us to get to the end of this reach, which bears a remarkable resemblance to the last and to the next. The jungle is as ugly as it can be—rank undergrowth, trailing rattans, and scraggy rotting trees. In forty miles I do not think there are half a dozen big trees worth looking at. Very occasionally you see a flowering creeper; one with clusters of white flowers is here and there, and I have seen a few of the gorgeous flaming D'Albertis creeper. Butterflies are seldom seen and birds one hardly hears at all. The banks are steep, slimy, brown mud, littered with the trunks and limbs of rotten trees, which also stick up all over the river like horrid muddy bones.

Altogether it is as gloomy and depressing as it can be; there is no view, not even a glimpse to show that we are getting near a mountain range. In the midst of all this it generally rains hard and you arrive in camp soaking wet. Then see everything taken out of the canoes, tents pitched, canoes securely moored, food given out to the coolies, and by that time it is well on into the afternoon. Wet wood is somehow coaxed into boiling a kettle and I get a cup of tea, very good. At six o'clock the meal of the day, rice or a tin, but one eats very little on these journeys. After dinner a book and tobacco and to bed about nine o'clock, or earlier if the mosquitoes are troublesome. It does not compare favourably with being 'on safari' in Africa, and I frequently wish myself back on one of those interminable roads which I have so often cursed.

There were periods, lasting for several weeks, when the river was almost continually in flood, and there were other, but always shorter, periods when the river was low; but though we spent fifteen months in New Guinea, the time was not long enough to determine at all accurately the limits of the seasons, for the first three months of 1911 differed considerably from the corresponding months of the previous year. Speaking generally, it may be said of the Mimika district that the weather from mid-October to mid-April is finer than the weather from the middle of April to the middle of October. The finest weather appears to be in November and December, and the wettest is in July, August, and September. The terms 'fine' and 'wet' are used only relatively, for it is almost always wet. In the first twelve months of our stay rain fell on three hundred and thirty days. It followed naturally from the heavy rainfall that the nights were seldom clear, and at one time there was a period of three months when it was impossible to take an astronomical observation. But there were times even in the wet weather when the rain poured down during the day and at night the heavens were clear. One of these times fortunately occurred in May, when Halley's Comet was approaching the earth. On May 9 the comet, looking like a muffled star, was seen in the East, and its tail, a broad beam of brilliant light, extended upwards through about thirty degrees. Below the comet and a little to the south of it Venus shone like a little moon, appearing far bigger than any planet I have ever seen. The comet grew enormously, and in the early morning of May 14, the last time that

we saw it completely before it had passed the earth, the tail blazed across the heavens like an immense searchlight beam to the zenith and beyond. On May 26 it appeared again in the evening, reduced in size to about forty-five degrees, and several nights we watched it, growing always smaller, until it vanished from our sight. Superlative expressions will not describe Halley's Comet as we saw it in New Guinea; it was a wonderful appearance and one never to be forgotten. Our coolies and the Javanese declared that it portended much sickness and death. Though we tried to question them about it, we never learnt how it impressed the minds of the natives.

The native village of Wakatimi lay directly opposite to our base-camp on the western bank of the Mimika, which was there about 150 yards wide. Beyond the margin of the river was a strip of grass intersected by muddy creeks, where the natives moored their canoes, and beyond that was Wakatimi. The village consisted of a single street about two hundred yards long, lined on one side by huts, which usually numbered about sixty. But occasionally, as for instance when we first arrived, and once or twice subsequently, when large crowds of natives from other villages visited the place, it happened that the street was a double row of houses, and every available spot of dry ground was occupied.

Shifting house is a very simple affair, as most of the building materials are carried about in the canoes, and the canoes come and go in the most casual and unaccountable manner. Sometimes there were perhaps a thousand people at Wakatimi, and then there would be days when there was not a soul in the village. There were times when for weeks together there were large villages at the mouth of the river, and there were other times when the coast was utterly deserted and hardly a trace of the villages remained. We were never able to learn what it was that prompted these migrations of the natives, but it is probable that the pursuit of food was the guiding motive. The wandering habits of the people will certainly make it very difficult to administer the country and civilise the people, if an attempt to do so is ever made.

It is only rarely that a house remains for long separated from others; when a second house is built it is attached to the side of the first, and the dividing wall is removed. In a large village the houses are built in rows of varying length, according

to the nature of the ground, and there may be as many as fifty or sixty joined together. If you go inside you find that it is a single long house without any dividing walls, but each family keeps to its own particular section and uses its own private entrance. When the place is crowded with people and a number of fires are burning, the atmosphere inside the house may be more readily imagined than described.

Generally speaking, we remained always on very good terms with the Papuans. They profited greatly from our visit to their country in the acquisition of metal and cloth and ornaments undreamt of before, and we gained some insight into the manner of life of one of the most primitive races of mankind. Their complete isolation from more civilised races added immensely to their interest, but at the same time it provided a serious stumbling-block in the way of our mutual understanding. There is no common language in use along that coast, and as none of the Papuans knew one word of Malay and we knew not one word of their tongue, we found ourselves confronted with the task of learning a language with neither grammar, dictionary, nor interpreter. This may not seem to be an insuperable difficulty, nor is it perhaps where Europeans and educated people are concerned, but with Papuans it is a very different problem. The first thing to do—and very few of them would even grasp the idea—is to make them understand that you wish to learn their words. You may point at an object and look intelligent and expectant, but they are slow to take your meaning, and they soon tire of giving information. The facial expression, which amongst us conveys even to a deaf man an interrogation, means nothing to them, nor has the sideways shake of the head a negative meaning to Papuans.

In trying to learn a new language of this kind most people (I imagine) would begin, as we did, with the numerals. But our researches in this direction did not take us very far, for we made the interesting discovery that they have words for 'one' and 'two' only; *inakwa* (one), *jamani* (two). This is not to say that they cannot reckon beyond two, for they can, by using the fingers and thumbs, and beginning always with the thumb of the right hand, reckon with tolerable accuracy up to ten. For numbers above ten they use the toes—never, so far as we observed, two or three toes, but always all the toes together to indicate a large but uncertain number. Sometimes they opened and closed the fingers of both hands two or three times and

uttered the word *takiri*, which appeared to mean 'many.' They did not, as some people do, use the word which means 'hand' to indicate five or a quantity of about that number.

With patience we learnt a great number of substantives—the names of animals, the parts of the body, the various possessions of the natives, and so forth—and with more difficulty we learnt some of the active verbs. But when we came to abstract ideas, our researches ceased abruptly for lack of the question-words—who, how, where, when, &c.; these we were never able to learn, and it is impossible to act them.

Thus we were never able to find out what they thought of various things; we could point to the moon and be told its name, but we were never able to say, 'What is the moon?' We learnt the names of lightning and thunder, but we never knew who they thought produced them. We could not find out where their stone axes came from, nor how old they were, or who made them; and a hundred other questions which we should have liked to put remained unanswered.

Even the apparently simple matter of inquiring the names of places is not so easy as one would think. When the first party went up the Mimika to Parimau they pointed to the huts and asked what the village was called; the answer given was 'Tupué,' meaning, I believe, the name of the family who lived in the huts pointed at. For several months we called the place Tupué, and the name appeared in various disguises in the English newspapers. When I was at Parimau in July, it occurred to me to doubt the name of Tupué, which we never heard the natives use, so I questioned a man elaborately. Pointing in the direction of Wakatimi, I said in his language, 'Many houses, Wakatimi,' and he nodded assent; then pointing in the direction of another village that we had visited I said, 'Many houses, Imah,' to which he agreed; then I said, 'Many houses,' and pointed towards Parimau. This performance was repeated three times before he understood my intention and supplied the word 'Parimau,' and then he shouted the whole story across the river to the people in the village, who received it with shouts of laughter, and well they might. It was as if a foreigner, who had been living for six months in a place which he was accustomed to call Jones, inquired again one day what its name was and found that it was London.

The chief business in the lives of the Papuans is that of all animals, human and others, namely, the search for food. But

while the civilised races have learnt to foresee wants of the future, and have established a system of agriculture which provides food for everybody and leaves a part of the population free to pursue other occupations, the Papuans take no thought for the morrow, and the search for food becomes literally a hand-to-mouth business, which occupies the attention of every member of the community.

They have no cultivation in the Mimika villages, and even at those places, such as Obota, where there is some cultivation, the crops that they raise are not nearly sufficient for the whole population, so it can easily be imagined that an improvident people living in a country constantly liable to sudden floods, which swamp the land for weeks at a time, is frequently faced with a prospect of complete starvation. At first you are inclined to think that the whole of the business of collecting food falls on the shoulders of the women, while the men sit at home and do nothing. This is certainly true of a great many days in the year, but certain tasks can only be performed by the men, such as hunting for game in the jungle, and felling trees to make the canoes, without which the people must inevitably starve.

The search for food furnishes occasionally some very curious scenes. One of the most remarkable occurs when the river in flood brings down a tree-trunk in a suitable stage of decay. A canoe is sent out with men to secure it and tow it to the bank. When it has been left stranded by the falling water, the people, men, women, and children, come out and swarm around it like bees about a honey-pot, and you wonder what they can be doing. When you go close you find that some are splitting up the log with their stone axes, and others are cutting up the fragments with sharpened shells in the same way that their ancestors—and perhaps ours too—did centuries ago. The objects of their search are the large white larvæ of a beetle, about the size of a man's thumb; I have seen natives eat them just as they cut them out of the wood, but usually they roast them in the fire and consider them a great delicacy.

When we arrived in the country the people possessed only two or three small scraps of soft iron, so it may be said that to all intents and purposes they were still in the age of stone. With their stone axes they cut down huge trees and hollow them out to make their canoes, a labour which it is not easy to realise. The axes quickly become blunted with use, and they are sharpened by being rubbed upon another stone. At Wakatimi

stones are very rare, and one old man appeared to be the stone-smith of the village. I remember seeing him sitting outside his hut one day sharpening an axe, with three or four others lying beside him waiting to be done, while a few yards away a woman was splitting a log of wood with a stone axe. It struck me as being one of the most primitive scenes I had ever witnessed, really a glimpse of the Stone Age.

Their knives are simply shells ground down to a fine edge, and with them they fashion their spears and bows and arrows and ornament their canoes with carving. Most people have the idea that the savage man performs prodigies of skill with his bow and arrows, but whenever I saw the Papuans shooting they made astonishingly bad practice.

Their other weapons are equally primitive, and consist of roughly carved wooden clubs, or clubs with stone heads of various patterns. These are very murderous-looking weapons, and they appear to be capable of inflicting dangerous wounds, but in the village quarrels, in which we mostly saw them used, there was more shouting than bloodshed.

The struggle for existence is keen enough; the birth-rate is low and the rate of infant mortality is, I believe, very high. They are afflicted by many diseases, and the climate is, to say the least, unhealthy. But in spite of all these drawbacks the Papuans of the Mimika are not such a very miserable people. They are strong, those of them that survive the ordeal of infancy and sickness; they have food in plenty to eat, if they choose to exert themselves sufficiently; they have their amusements, songs and dances; and the manner of their lives is suited to the country in which they live. It is this last consideration which ought ultimately to determine their fate: they live in a wretchedly poor country which is constantly liable to devastating floods, and their habit of wandering from one place to another, where food may be obtained, is the only way of life suitable to the physical and climatic conditions of the country.

Any attempt to civilise them must inevitably destroy their primitive independence, and if it succeeded in establishing the people in settled communities, it would reduce them at many seasons to absolute starvation. So one dares to hope that such an interesting people may for a long time be left undisturbed; they do no harm to their neighbours, and the effects on them of civilising influences would be at the best uncertain.

A. F. R. WOLLASTON.

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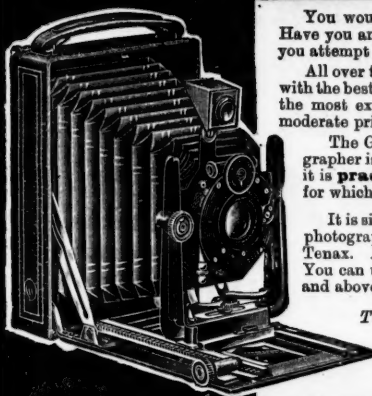


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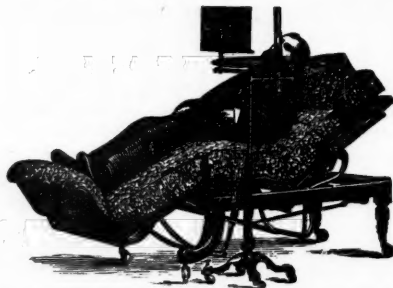
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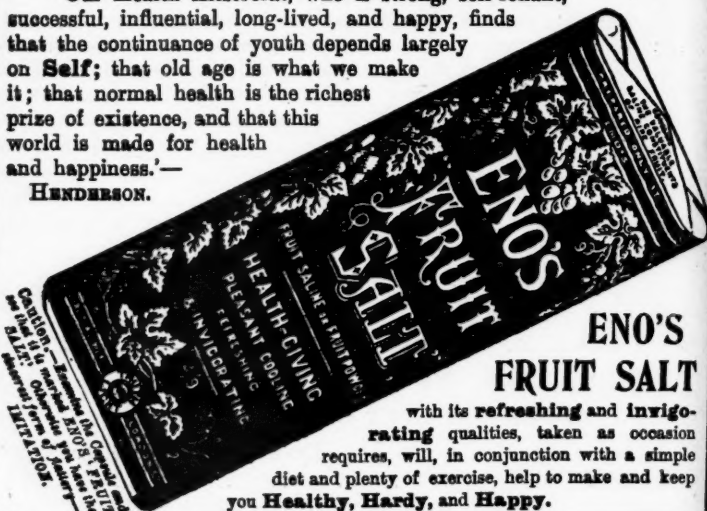
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